

SERMONS

ON

Several Subjects.

As,

Right receiving the Word
preached.

Christ a Blessing to *Jews*
and *Gentiles*.

Living and Dying to the
LORD.

The Incarnation.

The pouring out the Holy
Ghost on the Apostles,
the Effect of Christ's
Exaltation.

Laying up Treasure in
Heaven.

Walking that will please
GOD.

The Evidence of Mira-
cles for Christianity.

Abounding more and more
in what will please GOD.

Of the Use and Abuse
of GOD's Judgments
on others.

By SIMON BROWNE. *K*



L O N D O N :

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TO THE
CONGREGATION

*That attend on my Ministry in the
Old Jewry.*

PROVIDENCE, that has the Direction of all human Affairs, brought me, as you know, into my present Relation to you, when I was in a manner an utter Stranger to you all, and could have no Expectation nor Thought of such an Event. I adore the great GOD, and am thankful to you, that my Labours among you have met with so much Acceptance. I am your Debtor on this, and many other Accounts, and reckon my self bound by the strong Ties both of Duty and Affection, to promote your spiritual Interests, by all the proper Methods I can. You can bear me Witness, I hope, that this View runs thro' the whole Course of my Ministrations: That I am pursuing, tho' with very unequal Abilities, and alas! with too little Success, the same Design with your former excellent Pastor. A Design to promote pure, peaceable and practical Religion without Rage or Bitterness against any, and to spread the Spirit of Christianity, not that of a Party.

TO forward this Design, the following Sermons are now put into your Hands. Most of them were delivered in your Hearing, and, I hope, will both

please and edify, now they are offered to you again in this Form. The rest were preached to that kind Congregation from which I removed to you, when I took my Leave of them; A People of whose Esteem and Affection, I must retain indelible Impressions. They are upon a Subject, however, in which all Christians have an equal Concern. It is our great Business, to walk so as to please GOD. And I thought I might stir up their Minds by way of Remembrance, and do good to you and others by making them publick. In one of these, I have been led to consider the Attestation given by Miracles to Christianity, which I have endeavoured to set in as clear a Light as I could; and I hope you will meet with somewhat here that is satisfactory, and will help to confirm your Faith of the Divine Extraction and Authority of our holy Religion.

THE last Sermon in this Collection appears in Print, at the Desire of several of my Brethren in the Ministry, and others, who heard it in the Neighbourhood of the City, upon an Occasion like that, on which it was more imperfectly delivered first to you. I hope they will acquit me of my Promise upon seeing it here. I thought it not only proper on that Occasion, and seasonable on many Accounts at this Time, but of standing Use in all Times. It is so common a Thing in Practice both among good and bad People, and yet so evil in it self, to enter into the Counsels of GOD, and rashly judge whom he afflicts, that all Times and Persons will need a Caution against it. For this Reason I thought it fitter to be sent abroad with this Collection than by it self. I would also have some Account of the awful Providence which gave Occasion to it, transmitted to future Times, which I thought would be better done this
Way,

The DEDICATION.

V

Way, than in a single Sermon, if any thing of mine shall live long enough.

I hope my Endeavours in this Way to serve you, will be kindly accepted. You'll find nothing here, but what is fitted to serve the Purposes of Edification, and promote sound and practical Religion. The Subjects treated of concern its very Life, and I have laboured to handle them in such a Way as at once to inform the Mind, reach the Conscience and affect the Heart. This I would aim at in every Sermon. Indeed to raise the Passions without first setting the Judgment right, is to carry the Man into all the Wilds and wanton Freaks of Enthusiasm. It is like putting Spurs to the Horse, and giving him the Reins, that he may run away with his Rider. No Wonder, if in such a Case a Man be sunk in a Bog, or dashed to Pieces from a Precipice, e're he is aware. But, on the other hand, it will signify little to the Advancement of real Religion, to set the Head right, if we cannot also warm and engage the Heart. For tho' the Affections should not have the supreme Direction, they must be the immediate Springs of human Action. A Man will never be persuaded to seek with any Diligence what he does not affect, nor shun with any Care what he does not abhor. The Business of a Preacher therefore, is first to set Truth in as strong a Light as he can, and then, if possible, make his Audience feel the Force of it. This is what I have endeavoured. May the GOD of all Grace vouchsafe to add his Blessing, and then I hope you will meet with somewhat here to your spiritual Advantage, which is the earnest Prayer of one who wishes you all well for both Worlds, and is

March 25.

1722.

Your humble Servant,

SIMON BROWNE.

A
TABLE
OF THE
Texts *and* Subjects.

SERMON I.

Right receiving the Word of GOD.

1 THES. II. 13.

*For this Cause also, thank we GOD
without ceasing, because when ye received
the Word of GOD, which ye heard of
us, ye received it not as the Word of
Men, but, as it is in Truth, the Word
of GOD, which also effectually work-
eth in you that believe.*

SERM. II.

Christ a Blessing to *Jews and Gentiles.*

LUKE II. 32.

*A Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the
Glory of thy People Israel.*

SERM. III.

Living and Dying to the LORD.

ROM. XIV. 8. former Part.

*For whether we live, we live to the Lord;
and whether we die, we die to the Lord.*

SERM.

S E R M. IV.

The Incarnation of GOD the Word.

JOHN I. 14. former Part.

And the WORD was made Flesh.

S E R M. V.

The pouring forth the Holy Ghost on the Apostles, the Effect of our Saviour's Exaltation.

ACTS II. 32.

Therefore being by the right Hand of GOD exalted, and having received of the Father the Promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth that which ye now see and hear.

S E R M. VI, VII, VIII.

Laying up Treasure in Heaven, with the Grounds and Reasons of it.

MAT. VI. 20.

But lay up for your selves Treasures in Heaven, where neither Moth nor Rust doth corrupt, nor Thieves break thro' and steal.

S E R M. IX.

Walking and pleasing GOD.

1 THES. IV. 1.

Furthermore, Brethren, we beseech and exhort you, by our Lord Jesus Christ, that as ye have received of us, how you ought

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to

*to walk and please GOD, so ye would
abound therein more and more.*

S E R M. X.

The Obligation there is upon Christians to
walk according to the Apostles Direction.

The same Text.

S E R M. XI.

Abounding more and more in what will
please GOD.

The same.

S E R M XII.

Apostolical Arguments and Intreaties so to
walk and abound.

The same.

L U K E XIII.

The Judgments of GOD on Others, how
abused, and how to be improved.

L U K E XIII. part of 4. and Ver. 5.

*Think ye that they were Sinners above all
Men who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell
you nay: But unless ye repent, ye shall
all likewise perish.*

3 NO 33

Some few Literal Mistakes the Reader is desired to overlook.
These need his Correction.

PAGE 50. line 15. place the *Semicolon* after Enjoyment.

P. 122. Note, dele *vide* S E R M. 16.

P. 136. l. ult. for *is*, read *that is*.

P. 141. l. 30, 31. for *fourteenth* r.
fortieth.

P. 170. l. 23. after *Devotion*, add of
his Saints.

P. 211. l. 2. for *n*, r. *in*.

P. 251. l. 12. for *hasting*, r. *passing*.

P. 272. at the Bottom add, *standing
the Way of thy Precepts*. And

P. 282. l. 16. after *desolate* place a
Point.

P. 330. l. 11. for *any*, r. *every*.

P. 352. l. for *bea* r. *be a*.



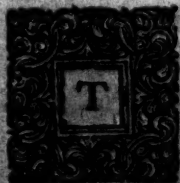
*The Reception to be given to the
Word of GOD.*

A
S E R M O N

Preached in the OLD JEWRY,
May 11, 1716.

I THESSAL. ii. 13.

*For this cause also thank we GOD without
ceasing, because, when ye received the
Word of GOD which ye heard of us,
ye received it not as the Word of Men,
but, as it is in Truth, the Word of GOD,
which also effectually worketh in you that
believe.*



HE Providence of GOD and your SERM. I.
own Choice having made me your
Minister, I am now entring upon
stated Service among you in that
Character. I doubt not but your
Prayers to GOD have concurred with mine,
B that

The Reception to be given

SERM. I. that I might * *come to you in the fulness of the Blessing of the Gospel of Christ*, and be made an Instrument of good, of much good to all your Souls. I hope you will continue to be earnest with GOD, that what is wanting in the Instrument, may be made up to you, by a more abundant supply of the Divine Blessing and Influence on my Ministration.

IT will not be the least, nor the least difficult part of my Work among you, to *publish, explain and apply* the Word of GOD. This will be the principal Branch of all my public Work: And as it is my Concern to be a † *faithful Steward of the Mysteries of GOD*, so is it yours to receive in a due manner, what I shall deliver in the Name of our Common LORD, and by *his* Authority. To give you some direction to this purpose, I thought would be a proper Preface to all my future Services among you. For this Reason I have read to you the Words of my Text.

IN this Chapter, the *Apostle* gives the History of his Ministry and Success among the *Thessalonians*. The twelve first Verses are a Narrative of his own Conduct, which in short was this, *viz.* His *Intentions* were generous and noble, he designed *their* Salvation, not *his own* Honour nor Advantage: Nor did he use unworthy *means* to compass so noble an End. He practised not upon their Ignorance by Deceit and Flattery, nor upon their vitious Inclinations by giving any Indulgence to their Lusts, *nor did he seek to please Men, but GOD who searcheth the Hearts*. He did not over-bear them by any Claims or Exercises of extravagant Power (though his Pretensions this way might

* Rom. xv. 24. † 1 Cor. iv. 1.

have been as high as any) but with the most SERIAL 1 tender Affection and the greatest Gentleness, he sought their Good without regard to his own Interest: And, that he might be useful among them, was not burthensome to them in any thing. And he backed his Charges and Exhortations to *Them*, with a just, holy and unblameable Conversation, and urged *Them* to the Practice of no Duty, but what he *Himself* was careful to perform. How noble a Pattern and worthy of all Imitation, is here proposed to all, *who are allowed of GOD to be put in trust with the Gospel?*

HAVING thus gone over his Conduct among them, he proceeds in my Text to give some account of the Success GOD had given to his Ministry, and of the Effect it had upon himself on the Review.

I have not room in one Discourse to be large on this Subject, and therefore shall lay before you the Sense of the Text in a few Propositions, which I shall endeavour to explain and improve. And

First, THE Word of GOD may be delivered by Men, and received from them. *Ye received the Word of GOD, which ye heard of us.* The Apostle in plain terms tells the *Thessalonians* in this Passage, that they had heard the Word of GOD from him. Words are properly the Signs of our Thoughts. Whatever therefore is a plain and certain Signification of the Mind and Will of GOD, may be termed his Word, whether it be his whole Will, or only a part of it, that is thus signified. The Apostle is to be understood of GOD's Word in the former Sense, that Body of Evangelical Truths which he had delivered

SERM. I. to this Church, and contained as full a Signification of the Divine Will, as was necessary to be communicated to them. This was that Word of GOD which they had received. And all the ordinary Ministers of the Gospel are, according to their Ability, to deliver this Word to their Hearers, in all successive Ages of the Church.

Now this Word of GOD may be delivered from immediate Inspiration, * *Holy Men speaking as they are moved by the Holy Ghost.* Thus the Prophets under the *Jewish Dispensation*, and the Apostles of *Christ* delivered GOD's Word; the Spirit of GOD immediately suggesting to their Minds, what he would have made known to his Churches. And what they did in this manner utter, from immediate Suggestion of GOD's Spirit, and under his infallible Conduct, may as properly be termed the Word of GOD, as if it had been uttered like the Ten Commandments on Mount *Sinai*, with an † audible Voice. For this could no more properly be the Voice of GOD, than the Voice of a Man is his, when uttering the Dictates of his Holy Spirit, under such Conduct and Influence, as secures from all mistake and misreport. For GOD being a pure Spirit can have no Mouth nor Tongue, without which there can be no proper Speech. The Words therefore heard from Mount *Sinai* must have been a created Sound; and the Voice of Man uttering divine Inspirations, under such Conduct as I have mentioned, must be as much the Voice of GOD, as the Sound formed in the Air upon Mount *Sinai*. Those who make known the

* 2 Pet. i. 21.

† Exod. xx. 1.

to the Word of GOD.

5

Mind of GOD to us under such Inspiration, SERM. I.
may very properly be said to deliver his Word
to us. 

AND as there is a *Verbum scriptum* as well as a *Verbum prolatum*, whatever is uttered by the Mouth may also be committed to writing; so what is written by inspired Persons, under the Restrictions above-mentioned, is as much the Word of GOD, as if the same thing had been pronounced with an audible Voice. For what is written is as certain a signification of his mind, as what is spoken. Nay, and might be so, if there were no such thing as a Power of Speech in the World, if writing were the common and universal Method of Men's communicating and conveying their Thoughts. For the Word written is as apt and proper for this Conveyance, as the Word spoken. Whatever therefore is either spoken or written by Inspiration of GOD's Spirit, is to be looked upon as his Word, though Men are the Instruments employed in speaking or writing it.

THE Apostles had a Commission, in both these ways, to make known the Will of GOD. And what *they* delivered to Mankind in the Name of GOD, *these* were obliged to receive as his Word. They carried their Credentials always with them: Miraculous Powers gave Attestation to what they said, and were their continual Vouchers. What the first Christians therefore heard from them who were inspired, at the time they pretended to Inspiration (for they were not always under such impulse) was the very Word of GOD, though those who uttered it were Men of like Frailties and Passions with others. And, for the same reason,

SERM. I. what they have left upon Record in Writing, for the standing use of the Christian Church, is also to be owned and received as the Word of GOD. And thus far the Proposition I think is true and obvious.

BUT it is a more difficult Enquiry, how Men making no Pretensions to Inspiration, or utterly unable to support them by proper Vouchers, can be said to speak the Word of GOD, or others to receive it from them; for this is the Case as to all ordinary Ministers.

NOW here it is plain, that when they read the Scriptures, in any Language that truly expresses the Sense of the Original, this is reading the Word of GOD; for this is a true Signification of his Mind and Will, and what is so, is his Word. But it is not to be thought, that GOD instituted an Evangelical Ministry, for mere reading his Word translated into vulgar Languages; since this may be done, when neither he that reads, nor they who hear, understand at all what is read, but both may need * *one to guide them*. That Mankind may be instructed to any saving Purpose out of the Holy Scriptures, it is needful they should be explained, and applied to their Consciences, that they may perceive their Meaning, admit their Influence, and feel the Power of that Truth contained in them. And this is the proper Work of Evangelical Ministers. But seeing they do not explain by Inspiration, how can it be known, that what they speak is the *Word of GOD*? Must we take the Sense they put upon Scripture at a venture; and though we know them fallible, yet receive their Interpretations for the

* Acts viii. 30, 31.

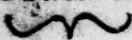
very *Word of GOD*? By no means: For this, SERM. I.
in many Cases, would make the Fancies and
Follies of Men pass for *Divine Oracles*. ~

YET this is plain and certain, that if they deliver what we know GOD hath already spoken in so many Words, or to the same Purpose, though in other Words, or what is a necessary Inference from it, or hath certain and evident Connexion with it, they may be said to deliver the *Word of GOD*. For whatever truly signifies his Mind to us, is his Word. And whenever the plain Sense of Scripture is delivered by Ministers, this is such a Signification: And whatever certain Inferences they draw from what GOD hath expressly said, is a like Signification. For by uttering one Truth he may be truly said to utter every one, that is a necessary Deduction from it.

WHEN therefore the common Ministers of Christ preach Doctrines manifestly contained in the Scriptures, or draw Inferences that are manifest and certain Deductions from them, or press to Duties certainly required in the Word of GOD, or manifestly dependent on them, and connected with them, they may in these cases be properly said to preach the *Word of GOD*. Nay, where equal degree of Evidence with what I have been mentioning cannot be given, yet in such degree as the Hearer is convinced, that what the Minister delivers, is either contained in the Scriptures, or may be concluded or inferred from them, he must be obliged to receive it *as the Word of GOD*.

YEA what is plainly the Voice of Common, or every Man's Reason about Matters of religious Persuasion or Practice, must also be acknowledged for the Word of GOD, and re-

The Reception to be given

SERM. I.  ceived as such : For it is a Signification of his Will to his Creatures. It is his *natural* Word, as what is spoken by Inspiration of his Spirit, is his Word *supernatural*, a Signification of his Mind made in an extraordinary way. But the former may be as true a Signification of his Mind as the latter ; though it is much for our Advantage in our present degenerate Condition, that we are not left to the bare Light of Reason, but enjoy the Benefit of Revelation.

BUT in these several Senses, may the ordinary Ministers of the Gospel be said to deliver *the Word of GOD*, or make known his Will to Men about things of Religion. I proceed now to observe

II. *Secondly*, THAT when the Word of GOD is truly delivered, it should be received, *not as the Word of Man, but as it is indeed, the Word of GOD*. The original Reading is, * *Ye received not the Word of Man, but as it is in Truth, the Word of GOD*. But the Construction of the Sentence requires a supply of the Particle our Translators have added, as is plain to any, that will read the Passage both ways, and attend to the Scope of the *Apostle*. I take the Sense therefore as it lies in our Translation; and so it plainly intimates to us, that the Word of GOD is not to be received as the *Word of Man*, but is to be received *as the Word of GOD*. That the *Thessalonians* had thus received the Word they heard from *St. Paul*, was matter of Thanksgiving on their behalf. This carries a plain Intimation that they acted

* Ἐδέξαθε ὃ λόγον ἀνθρώπων ἀλλὰ (καθὼς ἐστὶν ἀληθῶς) λόγον Θεοῦ.

as they should, and that we should imitate them SERM. I.
herein.

I. *First*, It should not be received as the Word of Man. It must not be heard, or regarded, or entertained as the mere Word of Man, of such a Being as our selves, with whom, as to our common Faculties, we stand on a level. Men *are weak and fallible*, as we our selves are. They may be deceived themselves, and may design to deceive others. And the more plausible or artful their Speech is, the more insinuating their Address, the more apt may they be to deceive. *Fables may be cunningly devised or * sophistical*, and the *enticing Words of Man's Wisdom*, may not only beguile the Simple, but Men of much Caution and strong Faculties. The Words of Man must therefore be received with some Caution and Reserve, and whilst we hear we should be on our guard in some measure. Not so the Word of GOD.

MEN considered merely as such, *speak with no Weight or Authority*, but what the Importance of the Matter spoken, or the Evidence of its Truth gives them. We are not bound to pay deference to their Dictates, any farther than appears reasonable to our selves. Indeed, 'tis in our Power to be thus resigning, and it is too common a Practice; but we are under no Obligations, in this manner to yield up our minds into the Power of any Man. We have thinking Powers wherewith to search out Truth as well as others, and to examine what they deliver for Truth; and we cannot be obliged to lay all our own Faculties by, and judge by the Understanding of others. Nay,

* Σειροφισαφες μύθοι.

† 2 Pet. i. 16.

SER. M. I. if I mistake not, it is a Command of our common Lord, that we should thus * *call no Man Master upon Earth*; at least 'tis an Injunction of his to inspired Ministers, not to admit this high Title. But sure I am, he who thus resigns his Understanding, and believes at a venture whatever another Man tells him, not only renounces his Right, but in a great measure his Reason too. Indeed, we may ask the Advice of such as are wiser than our selves, and in many cases it would be our Wisdom to receive and follow it: But to do this out of mere deference to their Authority, without weighing or considering whether it be fit to be followed, is what we do not owe to *them*, nor can well consist with what we owe to *our selves*. The Word of Man therefore, considered *as such*, is destitute of Authority. It can't command our Assent. We are not bound to take it for granted without examining it, nor allow it to have any Weight with us for the *Speaker's* sake, if it doth not appear *it self* to deserve it. We may therefore ask a Reason before we receive it, if we are not bound to do so. Not *so the Word of GOD*.

NAY, for this Reason what Man speaks *may be heard with Indifferency*, we may give heed to it, or not, as seemeth good to our selves, without breaking in upon any Right of theirs, or breaking through any Obligation we are under to them. We are not bound to regard what they say, any farther than it appears to concern us, or to be well worthy our regard; *i. e.* not for their sakes who speak it, but for

* Matth. xxiii. 8, 10.

the sake of what is said, or the Interest we, our SERM. I.
selves have in it.

BUT what plainly appears to be the Word of GOD, is not to be heard with the least Indifferency, or Distrust and Misgiving, nor with any shadow of Neglect and Disregard. It is the Voice of Truth it self. It must have Weight in it self, and Authority with us; for it is the Voice of perfect Wisdom, and comes with Power and Command in the strongest Sense, *Supreme and Absolute*.

II. *Secondly*, It must be received *as the Word of GOD*. The Word of the most Wise and Knowing, the most True and Faithful, the most Just and Holy, the most Gracious and Powerful, and the most Awful and Magnificent Being: The Almighty Maker, and the Absolute Lord and Sovereign of the whole World. Every Title and Attribute of his carries the utmost Majesty and Glory in the very sound, and claims the last respect from every one of his Creatures.

THE *Word of this GOD* must therefore be received with the most *ready assent*, and the *firmest* and *fullest persuasion*. There is no room for Doubt or Debate where he has clearly made known his Mind. It is the Word of one who cannot be deceived himself, nor can he deceive others. * *It is impossible that he should lie*.

It should also be received with the *utmost Deference and Regard*. It is the Voice of the highest Authority. † *Where the Word of a King is, there is Power*. The Rank and Authority of the Speaker demand Regard. How

Tit. i. 2.

† Eccl. viii. 4.

The Reception to be given

SERM. I. much more the Word of the World's King, of the ^a *Blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords?* Such is his consummate Wisdom, that he can utter nothing but what is fit to be spoken; and such his boundless Authority and Command, that whatever he speaks demands the utmost Attention and Respect. To receive what he speaks with the least shew of Slighting or Disrespect, is to express Neglect of that Majesty, before which *Angels veil their faces*, and of that Authority, to which they pay the most profound Submission: And such Neglect can bear no softer Name than that of Contempt. What GOD speaks must be heard with the utmost Attention and Deference, as we would avoid the Guilt, the heinous Guilt of despising GOD. He who flights what GOD speaks, though by Men, ^b *despiseth not Man but GOD.*

It should also be received with the *utmost Concern*. The whole Mind should be awake, and engaged, when GOD speaks. He never speaks but upon proper and important Occasions. And whenever he speaks to Men, they are deeply concerned in the Import of what he speaks. It is neither becoming his Wisdom nor Majesty, to open his Mouth to his Creatures, but in Matters of the last Moment. What he speaks therefore should be heard with all possible Reverence for *Him*, and Concern for *our selves*. We should ^c *give the most earnest Heed* to what we hear from him, and ^d *indeed tremble at his Word.* ^e *His Excellency should make us afraid*; and our own Interest in

^a 1 Tim. v. 16. ^b 1 Thess. iv. 8. ^c Heb. ii. 1. ^d Esai. lxvi. 5. ^e Job xiii. 2.

what he speaks possess our Minds with the ut-^{SERM. I.}most Concern: And that though he speaks to us by Men, seeing he is ever present with us, and a Witness to the regard we pay to his Word, though we hear not his own Voice, nor see him with our Eyes.

It should also be heard with *heartly Love and Affection*. As it is the Word of a Sovereign, it is also the Voice of a Father. *‘We are all his Offspring.* And though we are backsliding Children, Wanderers from his Family, and Rebels against his Laws, yet he calls on every one of us with the Tenderness of a Father, to escape his Wrath, and come back again into his Family, and regain his Favour. Some of us, it is to be hoped, are become his Children by a new Birth from above, and by *the Spirit of Adoption* in us, are enabled to cry *Abba, Father.* Though he speaks to us therefore with the Air and Authority of a Father, and challenges our regard to his word by virtue of this Authority, yet should we hear his Voice with good liking and pleasure. Paternal Love will soften his Look and Voice, and take off somewhat from the Terror of his Majesty. And both the relation in which we stand to him, and the benefit we may have by what he speaks, should engage us to receive his Word with love and good liking. We should not hear him speak with Aversion and Dislike, as if it were a Burthen to us, nor with a careless Indifferency, but with real Pleasure and Satisfaction; nay with a principal Pleasure, such as *David* expresses, when he tells us, that the ^h *Law of GOD’s mouth was better to him than*

^f Acts xvii. 28. ^g Rom. viii. 15. ^h Psal. cxix. 72.

SERM. I. *thousands of Gold and Silver, and that his*
Words were sweet to his taste, yea sweeter than
honey to his mouth. And finally

It should be received with a *Mind submissive and obedient*; All open to its Impressions and Influences. It should not be heard, as a mere amusement, or entertainment of a loitering Hour, nor as the mere exercise of our Attention, with no more concern than just to hear and understand. It is a Word that reveals the most important Truths, that prescribes indisputable Duty, proposes powerful Motives to urge the performance of what it requires, declares the terms upon which we may now be in Friendship with GOD, and by it we must at last be judged, and have our Condition determined for ever. These are things, that must (if due Attention be given to them) make deep and durable Impressions on our Minds, and have a great and good Influence on our Temper and Conduct. When GOD therefore speaks to us, we should rouse our whole Souls, quicken our Attention, open our Hearts to take in the Truths he utters, yield to all their Impressions, and feel all their Force, that we may find his Word an ^k *engrafted Word*, a Word that will take root, and quicken in the mind, that will shew its power through the whole inner Man, govern every Thought, move every proper Passion, regulate every Appetite, bring every Imagination *to the Obedience of Christ*, and conduct and govern every outward Action. To receive the Word, as it is indeed the Word of GOD, is ^l *to hear and do it*. To hear it so as to be formed into the Temper it recommends,

ⁱ Ver. 103. * James i. 21. λόγον ἐμφύλον. ^l Ver. 12.

and act according to the Rules of Life given SERM. I.
in it. I proceed to observe

III. *Thirdly*, THAT the Power of the Word, upon the Hearts of those that believe it, is an evidence of its being received as the Word of GOD, nay it is a good evidence of its being so. It is a Word which powerfully worketh, saith the Apostle, in you who believe. And the Proposition here delivered, as I apprehend, speaks his meaning in these Words. And here it will be proper to enquire

I. *First*, WHAT this Power of the Word upon the Heart is?

II. *Secondly*, How Faith helps this powerful Operation?

III. *Thirdly*, How this Power of the Word upon the Heart, is an Evidence of its being received as the Word of GOD, and its being so in truth? Of each in order.

I. *First*, WHAT is this Power of the Word upon the Hearts of Men? It worketh^m powerfully, or effectually (as our Translation) in you that believe. This Operation and Influence is the Power which I mean. And this in Scripture-account is various: A saving Power is sometimes attributed to it. ^a The engrafted Word is able to save your Souls. Sometimes a cleansing and sanctifying Influence. ^a Seeing you have purified your Souls in obeying the Truth through the Spirit. ^p Sanctify them by thy Truth, thy Word is Truth. Sometimes a quickning Power is ascribed to it, for which reason it is called ^q the word of Life. Sometimes a regenerating

^m *Envyficat.* ^a James i. ^q Phil. ii. 16. λόγον ζωῆς, i. e.
21. ^a 1 Pet. i. 21. ^p John ^q λόγον ζωοποιούντων.
xvii. 11.

Influence,

SERM. I. Influence, ^r *Of his own will he begat us by the word of truth.* And sometimes a comforting Power; in which sense *David* saith, ^r *Unless thy Law had been my delight, I had perished in mine affliction.* In short, the Word of GOD is the great Instrument used by his Spirit, to convince, and cleanse, and renew, and quicken, and comfort those who are saved. And when I say the Power of the Word upon the Heart is an Evidence of its being received *as the Word of GOD*, I am to be understood of the Power manifested in these Effects.

WHEN it humbles for sin, when it begets sound faith in Christ, and gives holy boldness to draw nigh to GOD in his Name; when it possesses the Soul with an holy dread of GOD, and veneration for him, and warms the Heart with sincere and devout Love to the Redeemer; when it mortifies the mind to the World, and lifts it towards Heaven: When it puts it on the pursuit of that enduring Substance, and inspires with the high and purifying hopes of everlasting Glory: When by it the Man is made a real Convert from Sin to Holiness, from the World to GOD, and ^r *the Grace of GOD appearing to him therein, hath taught him effectually to deny all ungodliness and every worldly Lust, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in the World, with an Eye and Heart fixed on the blessed Hope*, then is there evidence of its being received *as the Word of GOD*. Then it appears to be the ^u *Power of GOD to Salvation*. I am next to shew

^r James i. 18. ^r Psal. cxix. 92. ^r Tit. ii. 12, 13. ^u Rom. i. 16.

II. *Secondly*, How Faith helps this Operation, or what Influence it hath towards these Effects. That it hath some Influence in this Case is plain. * *The Word preached*, saith the Apostle, *did not profit them, not being mixed with Faith in them who heard it.* The Word must be believed before it can be heard to any saving Advantage; nay, Faith in order to this effect must be in lively Exercise, it must be mixed with it. The Word doth not work upon us as a Spell or Charm, whilst we feel none of its Influence, nor are conscious of its Operation. Indeed the Spirit of GOD is the great Agent in all the Effects produced by it, but the Subject worked upon is a reasonable Being, and the Operation is in a way agreeable to its Nature. It must be first enlightned and convinced, before it can make any rational Choice or Determination. And the mutual Dependence of our Faculties in their Operations, is not destroyed by the Agency of the holy Spirit upon us. The Word therefore doth not work this Effect, no not as the Spirit's Instrument, till the Sense of it is perceived, and the Truth of it admitted, *i. e.* till it is firmly believed. But being once well understood, and firmly believed, the Mind will hereupon be prompted, even by the natural Love and Regard every Man bears to himself, to consider it, and attend to it; and hereby it will rouse the whole Mind, and excite the Passions, and influence the other Powers. And thus it is Sinners are at first converted from Sin to GOD; and those who are already sanctified, are more thorowly purged from Sin, and conformed to the Will of GOD,

* Heb. iv. 2.

The Reception to be given

SERM. I. and the Work begun in them is carried on to Perfection. The Word works powerfully in none but such as believe it. I come now

III. *Thirdly*, To shew how this Power of the Word, or those Effects produced by it, are an Evidence of its being received as *the Word of GOD*, and that it is *so in Truth*. The first may be made appear by two Considerations.

I. *First*, THE Nature of the thing. What is received merely as the *Word of Man*, with Wavering and Diffidence, with Indifferency and Carelessness, or without Deference and Resignation to its Authority, can never produce such glorious Effects. It may be attended to as an Amusement, or an Exercise of Thought, but a very deep Regard must be paid to what should produce such Effects as I have been mentioning. To free a Man from the Slavery of Sin, and the inordinate Love of an idolized World: To form him, who was earthly and sensual, into a divine and heavenly Temper: To possess his Mind with the Love of GOD and Holiness, who was an Enemy to both: To bring him to quit and renounce Earth who clung to it before, and live on the Hopes of an unseen Inheritance: And to keep him in continual Dependence on a Mediator, who is naturally proud and self-sufficient, must be above the Power of every thing that comes upon the Mind with no more than human Authority, and is received merely as *the Word of Man*. No such Effects were ever produced in their Minds, who went most fully into the Sentiments of *Pagan Philosophers*.

AND certainly firm Faith of what is spoken in the Word of GOD, and great Regard to the Authority

Authority of GOD speaking in it, are necessary to lay a Mind open to its Influence, that is naturally very much prejudiced against it. It is *Regard* to it as Divine that alone can break the *hard*, and bend the *stubborn*, and cleanse the *polluted Heart*: That can spiritualize the carnal Mind, and make the Worldling seek a better heavenly Country, or melt the proud and perverse Sinner into a penitent and humble Believer. No Reasoning however strong, no Eloquence and Oratory however moving, no Importunity however vehement, can produce such Effects, unless the Matter comes upon the Conscience with the Force and Weight of Divine Authority. What hath this Power and Influence on the Heart and Life, must therefore be received as the Word of GOD.

II. *Secondly*, THE concurring Operation of GOD's holy Spirit, helps out this Evidence. It is not by its own Power singly considered, no nor enforced with the Conviction of its Divine Authority, that these Effects are produced upon the Hearts, and in the Lives of Men. It is but an Instrument of the Spirit of Grace. He is the great Efficient, and it is by his Power the Word works so effectually. Hence in holy Scriptures the same Effects are ascribed both to the Word and Spirit of GOD. To the Spirit as the principal Agent, to the Word as his proper Instrument. Doth the Word purify? It *is through the Spirit*. Doth GOD beget us by the Word of Truth? 'Tis *yet by his own Will*. Doth the Word comfort us? It is only under the Influence of the Spirit, who is eminently called *the Comforter*.

^y 1 Pet. i. 21. ^z James i. 18. ^a John xiv. 26.

SERM. I. It is neither the Word of GOD made known to us, nor our own Belief of it as Divine, and Attention to its Discoveries (though those must concur) that can produce the forementioned Effects, without the more immediate Operation of the Spirit on our Minds. But this secret and powerful Operation of the Spirit with the Word, makes it indeed ^b *mighty and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged Sword, dividing between the Joints and the Marrow.* If that Text speaks to our present purpose, and is not rather to be understood of the *Λόγος ὑποσά-
λινος*, or GOD the Word.

BUT if there must be such a Concurrence of Divine Power with the Word, to give it such Success, is it not plain, that where it produces these Effects, it must have been received as the Word of GOD? Can it be thought the Spirit of GOD would put forth such Power on those Men's Minds, who receive the Word merely as the *Word of Man*, without any regard to it as Divine, or acknowledgment of its Authority? What were this but to confirm them in their Contempt of the Word, and prompt them wholly to overlook his own Influence?

AND this Consideration will also make out the other part of the Proposition. Such a concurring Operation of GOD's holy Spirit, is an Argument, that what is received *as the Word of GOD*, is *so in Truth*. It will justify that Man's Faith, who so thoroughly believes the Word of GOD, as to be renewed and sanctified by it. This Fruit of his Faith is an Evidence, to himself at least, that it is built on a sure Bottom. Hence is it said, that ^c *he who*

^b Heb. iv. 12.

^c 1 John v. 10.

believeth hath the Testimony in himself. He who SERM. I. so receives the Word of GOD, as to be worked by it into the Temper of a Child of GOD, and made holy and heavenly in Heart and Life, hath the Evidence in himself that he was not deceived, but that the Word he received was indeed, as well as in his Apprehensions, the Word of GOD. Such Fruits flowing from it, such a Change in Heart and Life worked by it, not by its own Power merely, but by the Virtue and Operation of GOD's Spirit, are Evidences that he could not be mistaken.

It can never be thought the Spirit of GOD, would give so much Countenance to Imposture (such monstrous Imposture, as would pass the Devices of Men upon the World, for the Oracles of GOD) as to put forth his own Power on the Hearts of Men, to make an Impression of the Doctrines taught, or transcribe the Temper recommended by such arrant Imposture. To suppose this, were to allow that GOD would set his Seal to a Lie, and he who is Truth it self, vouch for the most gross and hateful Forgery.

It is true, I have all along confined my self to the Proofs of Scripture, for the Necessity of a supernatural Influence, to render the Word powerful, which some may esteem a Defect in the Argument; the Word testifying this way to the Necessity of the Spirit's Agency, that the Spirit may in return testify to its Authority; so that here is no fresh Evidence, but the same thing witnessing to it self. But when I come to add that what the Scriptures testify in this Matter, is confirmed by common Experience; and every Man who has felt any thing of the Struggles of a corrupt Principle within

The Reception to be given

SERM. I. him, against all the Force and Power of Divine Truth, feels at the same time that he needs such superior Influence. And to such a Man the Evidence will stand clear, and the Argument convincing, though I own it is not so proper to convince an Infidel, or one altogether without Experience of this kind. They who so receive *the Word of GOD*, as to be sanctified by it, have herein a Proof that they received it as the Word of GOD, and that it is in Truth such as they received it. And this brings me to the last Proposition.

IV. *Fourthly*, THAT when the Word of GOD is thus received by any, it is matter of continual Thanksgiving to GOD from a faithful Minister. *For this cause*, saith the Apostle in the Text, *we thank GOD without ceasing*. We never forget to be thankful to GOD on this account, when we are offering our Devotions to him. And this implies two Things.

I. *First*, THAT this is matter of rejoicing to such a Minister himself. Nothing can be matter of Thanksgiving to GOD, but must antecedently cause Pleasure and Satisfaction in us. Whenever we render Thanks to GOD, we own our selves to have been obliged by Benefits conferred, and Joy and Pleasure excited in us, of which we confess him to be the Author in our grateful Acknowledgments; and in such Acts repeat our former Pleasure, and double it on our Minds. 'Twas great Satisfaction to the Apostle in my Text, to find that the *Thessalonians* had received the Word he preached, *as the Word of GOD*, and that this was made evident by the good Effects it had on them who believed. Is not this more than intimated in the Text, and plainly expressed

sed in the ^d Close of the Chapter? *What is* SERM. I. *our Hope or Joy, or Crown of rejoicing!* Observe how the Expressions rise. *Are not ye in the Presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? for ye are our Glory and Joy.* To the same purpose he tells the *Philippians*, they were ^e *his Joy and his Crown*: And the *Corinthians*, that they were ^f *his rejoicing in the Day of Christ*. And what was matter of Joy and Rejoicing to the Apostle, must be the same to every faithful Minister: To every one who is animated with the like Devotion to GOD, and Concern for the Salvation of Men.

THERE is abundant reason for this Pleasure from the Zeal every such Minister hath for GOD. His Kingdom is enlarged, his Command owned and submitted to, his Honour and Interests are promoted in proportion to the Success of his Ministry, and the effectual working of the Word of GOD in those who attend it. And must not every Christian rejoice hereat? And much more every faithful Minister, who is under double Obligation to be zealous, and concerned for his Lord's Interest and Honour, that of a Christian in common with others, and that of a Minister, or one *who hath been counted worthy of GOD, to be put in Trust with the Gospel*.

AND must not Charity and good Will to Souls have the same Effect, where this divine Affection is stirring in the Breast? Is it not the highest Interest of his Hearers, to receive the Gospel as the Word of GOD, and take in all its sanctifying Influences and Impressions? Is not this the only way *wherein* they can be re-

^d Ver. 19, 20. ^e Phil. iv. 1. ^f 2 Cor. i. 18.

SERM. I. covered from Death to Life, *wherein* they can regain the Favour of GOD, and be confirmed in it? *Wherein* they can escape eternal Vengeance, or have any safe and well grounded hopes of eternal Glory and Happiness? If then a Minister loves his Hearers, and is concerned for their Salvation, will it not be pleasing to him to the last degree, to see them passing out of *Darkness into marvellous Light*: Out of wretched Servitude to Sin and Satan, into the glorious Liberties of GOD's Children: Out of a State of Condemnation, into a State of Justification: And of Enemies to GOD, become his Friends and dear Children? To see their Minds transformed and renewed, and sound Religion taking Possession of their Hearts, and working a thorow Reformation in their Lives? Can any thing be more grateful to a Minister, truly concerned for the Glory of GOD, and the Salvation of Men, than this? From these Principles the Apostle tells the *Thessalonians*, that in ^s *all his Afflictions and Distresses he was comforted* over them, and that it was not possible for him to render sufficient Thanks to GOD for all the Joy, with which he rejoiced before GOD upon their account. And elsewhere he tells them, ^h *We glory in you in the Churches of GOD, for your Patience and Faith in all your Persecutions and Tribulations which ye endure.*

NAY, faithful Ministers will greatly rejoice in these good Effects of their Labours, because GOD hereby puts an Honour upon them. And the more sensible they are of their own Insufficiency and Unworthiness, for the honourable

^s 1 Thess. iii. 7. 9.

^h 2 Thess. i. 4.

Office they bear, the more lively will their Pleasure be in the Successes of their Ministry. Their being put into this Office gives them much Satisfaction. *Paul*, who, from a Sense of the Importance of his Office, and Weight of his Charge, could cry out, ⁱ *Who is sufficient for these Things?* Yet speaks of it elsewhere in a kind of Transport, ^k *To me who am less than the least of all Saints, is this Grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable Riches of Christ.* But to be succeeded in the Business of the Ministry, and be made serviceable to the Salvation of immortal Souls, must give a much more relishing Satisfaction, to a Minister who is faithful. It is a much greater Vouchsafement from GOD to have Success in this Office, than merely to be put into it. This is in a manner a Ratification of a Minister's Commission, according to that of the Apostle, ^l *If I be not an Apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you, for the Seal of mine Apostleship are ye in the LORD.* And must it not rejoice the Heart of every faithful Minister, to have GOD in this manner sealing to his Authority and Office, and confirming his Commission? And must not this Joy still rise the higher, the more depressing Sentiments the Man hath of himself, and the more just Sense of his own Unworthiness?

II. Secondly, THIS Joy must break out into Thanksgiving to GOD. It is not a Pleasure appropriated to himself, but paying Tribute to GOD in devout Acknowledgments. For this cause, saith the Apostle, *we thank GOD.* We are not only pleased in our selves,

ⁱ 2 Cor. ii. 16.

^k Eph. iii. 8.

^l 1 Cor. ix. 2.

The Reception to be given

SERM. I. but we offer up our Praises to GOD. We own
 our selves Debtors to him for the Pleasure we
 feel, and in a sort invite him to partake in
 it.

IF we have any Success in our Work; if
 the Word of GOD, which we preach, work-
 eth effectually in any, it is from GOD; for
^m Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but
 GOD giveth the increase. And should not the
 Joy we feel in our selves upon this Success, rise
 above our selves, and be carried up in Praise
 and Thanksgiving to GOD? The Apostle is
 frequent in these Acknowledgments. ⁿ *I thank*
my GOD, saith he to the Philippians, upon e-
very remembrance of you, always in every Prayer
making request with Joy for you all. So also to
 the Colossians, ^o *We give Thanks to GOD, and*
the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying al-
ways for you. And the Reason you find given
 afterwards. ^p *The Word of Truth which was*
come to them, did bring forth Fruit among them.
 And so to these Thessalonians, ^q *We give Thanks*
to GOD always for you all; and why was this,
but because the Gospel came not among them in
Word only, but also in Power?

AND like Successes will alike affect the
 Hearts, and open the Mouths of all faithful
 Ministers. They will rejoice at their Success,
 and the Joy they feel in their Hearts will break
 out in Thanksgivings to GOD, to whom they
 are Debtors for it.

AND now what remains but to bring home
 what has been said to the present Purpose, my
 Entrance on the full Exercise of my Ministry

^m 1 Cor. iii. 6. ⁿ Phil. i. 3, 4. ^o Col. i. 3. ^p Ver. 5, 6.
^q 1 Theff. i. 2.

among you? I would not however speak to SERM. I. you in mine own Name only, but in the joint Name of my self and my worthy Fellow-labourer. I would bespeak your Regard to us for our Works sake, and the sake of your own Souls.

WE are by the Providence of GOD called to minister among you *in the Gospel of his Son*, and to preach to you the Word of Truth and Life. It is our Duty, our proper Business, to search into the sacred Writings, and endeavour to find out the Mind and Will of GOD there made known, and to communicate to you what we learn from thence to be necessary to your Salvation, and that with all Plainness and Fidelity, all Earnestness and Zeal. We do not indeed pretend to speak by immediate Inspiration. We are charged with no *new Gospel*, nor do we undertake to publish any; no, nor to deliver the Sense of what inspired Men have left in Writing, by any immediate Suggestion from the Spirit of GOD. Did we make any such Pretences, you might very well demand miraculous Powers and Operations in Proof of them; and we should be very much wanting to you and our selves, if we made such Pretences without such Proofs to support them. We are Men of like Faculties, of like Passions and Frailties with your selves, and pretend to no greater Advantages for understanding the Holy Scriptures than you, besides what greater Leisure, and more Application and Study, with some superior Advantages of Literature to most of you, may afford us. We cannot come to you with the Authority of *Apostles* who spoke by Inspiration, and by miraculous Operations made it appear they had an

SERM. I. extraordinary Ministry and Mission, nor with those Suggestions from the Spirit of GOD to which they pretended.

YET have we some Authority as well as They. It is the Will of our Lord Jesus Christ, that there should be a continuing Ministry in his Church, or that the preaching his Word, and the Administration of his Ordinances, should be the proper Care and Business of a particular Body of Men. Without this Institution the Work had never been duly and regularly performed. And we having been put into this Office, according to our Saviour's Rule and Appointment, I hope may say in an inferior Sense, what the Apostle says not far from my Text, that *we have been allowed of GOD to be put in trust with the Gospel.* I am sure we are under Obligations to speak *so as to please GOD and not Men.*

SUFFER me therefore to lay before you, from what hath been said, an account of your Duty towards us, especially in that Branch of our Office that regards the Preaching the Word, and enforce it upon you by the Arguments offered in the Text. And

I. *First*, RECEIVE us as the Ministers of Christ. Look upon us as Persons who have Authority from him to preach the Gospel. *We have not taken this Honour to our selves,* but hope *we have been called to it of GOD.* And it is necessary you should own our Commission, and reverence our Character, if you would reap Benefit from our Ministrations. We claim no temporal Dominion over your Persons or Estates, no spiritual Dominion over

your Minds or Consciences. We affect no SERM. I.
 Honour or Respect that would intrench upon
 the Prerogatives of our Redeemer, or infer
 Bondage of any kind upon you. We would
 not ^t *Lord it over any part of GOD's Heri-*
tage, nor suffer the Character we bear to che-
 rish or encourage in the least our own Pride
 or Ambition. ^u *We preach Christ Jesus the*
Lord, and our selves your Servants for Jesus
sake; nay, Servants to the meanest of you all,
 to do you any Christian Offices within the
 Compass of our Commission, and the Obliga-
 tion of our Charge. We would by no means
preach our selves, any Authority or Interests of
 ours, but in Subordination to this grand In-
 tention of our Ministry, *the Honour of our*
Redeemer. And though ^x *we would magnify*
our Office, we would not forget that we are
 frail, and sinful, and fallible Men like your
 selves.

YET we must insist upon it, that in our
 Work we do not stand on a Level with you.
 We have some spiritual Authority over you.
 We minister among you by virtue of a Charge
 received from your Lord and ours. Preaching
 the Word to you is our Business, we have it
 in Charge from our Saviour, and therefore
 must have his Commission. Though we can-
 not charge you to receive *us* in the same Sense
 as the Apostles charged the primitive Believers
 to receive *them*, that is, as Apostles, as Mini-
 sters inspired and extraordinary, as Workers of
 Miracles, yet we may and must charge you to
 receive us as the ordinary Ministers of Christ,
 and account of us accordingly. The Institu-

^t 1 Pet. v. 3.

^u 2 Cor. iv. 5.

^x Rom. xi. 13.

SERM. I. tion of our Office is Divine as well as theirs, though the Powers belonging to it are not so great. You should *know us who labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and esteem us highly in Love, for our Works sake.* And indeed this is fit and necessary, that you may pay a due Regard to every Message we deliver in the Name of our Lord. And we would be understood to insist on thus much, more out of Regard to you, and for your Benefit, than from any Affectation of Lordly Pre-eminence among you, or Authority over you. And therefore

II. *Secondly,* GIVE due Attention and Regard to what we deliver in the Name of our LORD. Come not into Christian Assemblies merely out of Curiosity or Custom: To have your Ears tickled with fine Sounds, or your Fancies with beautiful Images and Descriptions, or to have your Minds entertained with close Arguing and exact Discourse. Come not merely to shew your selves dress'd out to Advantage, nor to see Fashions, and make Observations on the Dress or Ornaments of others. But come to be instructed in the Things of GOD, in the great Matters of the Gospel that so nearly concern you, and on which your eternal Interest so much depends. Come to pay Homage to your Maker and Redeemer, and employ your selves in Exercises of sincere Devotion. When you are in Christian Assemblies give no Allowance to a wandering Eye or Thought, but keep your Minds as closely engaged as possible in the great Work before you. Apply your selves with all Care and Diligence to every part

of Worship, and give earnest Heed to every SERM. I. Word we speak in our Master's Name, and by Authority from Him. Endeavour to take in its Sense, and feel the Weight and Force of it on your Hearts. Remember that in what we deliver agreeable to the Mind and Will of GOD, it is not so much we our selves that speak, as GOD who is speaking by us. And when GOD speaks to you, should not your Spirits be composed, and stirred up to the utmost Concern, Attention and Seriousness? But

III. *Thirdly*, BE sure to examine what we deliver in our Master's Name, and compare it with his Word. Apostles themselves who spoke by Inspiration, yet did not claim ² *Dominion over their Hearer's Faith*. They did not require them to receive what they taught so fully upon Authority, as to forbid all Examination of their Doctrine. When they had to do with *Jews*, who had been favoured with a former Revelation, they ^a argued with them out of their own Writings. So far were they from demanding Belief upon their bare Word, nay, though miraculous Power attested to the Truth of what they taught, that they commended them for searching into ancient Prophecies, ^b *to know whether what they said was true*. Nay, our Saviour himself appeals to these Scriptures of the *Jews*, as ^c bearing Testimony to him, though he gives them to understand at the same time, that he might demand Credit ^d *for his Works sake*.

AND if Teachers, who were truly infallible, and carried their Credentials with them,

² 2 Cor. i. 24.

^a Acts xviii. 28.

^b Ch. xvii. 12.

^c John v. 39.

^d John x. 25, 38.

SERM. I. and ^e by *Signs and Wonders, and divers Miracles*
 *and Gifts of the Holy Ghost*, could prove their Mission and Authority, yet allowed Examination of their Doctrine, and gave Commendations to their Hearers, who compared what they delivered with former Revelations in like manner attested, certainly those who pretend to no such immediate Mission from G O D, or extraordinary Power, or infallible Knowledge, can with no right in the World forbid the Examination of their Doctrines by that standing Revelation, into which all Christians may look, and out of which only they pretend to fetch them.

W E come not to you with a Word received by Inspiration, but we bring our Bibles in our Hands. To the Doctrines there taught, the Duties there required and pressed, and the Motives there proposed and urged, we refer you. Our Discourses have no Authority, but what Christian Revelation, and plain and sound Reason give them. Nor are you bound to receive any thing from us as the Word of G O D, but what may appear to your selves, upon due Enquiry, to be either expressly contained in it, or deducible from it, or to be a Dictate of sound Reason, the common Reason of Mankind; which must be pre-supposed to all Revelation supernatural, and can't in any Instance be contradictory to it, or contradicted by it.

Y O U must therefore, as you are able, look into the Holy Scriptures; you must consult your own Reason, and the common Sense of Mankind, to know whether what we preach is agreeable to Truth and the Holy Scriptures,

^e Heb. ii. 4.

and indeed the Mind and Will of GOD. You SERM. I.
are not bound to receive any thing you hear
from us, merely because we say it, but because
upon due Enquiry you will find it agreeable to the
Mind of GOD, made known by the Light of
Reason, or in his written Word. Nay, you
will be defective in your Duty if you do not,
according to your several Abilities and Oppor-
tunities, examine into what we preach, and
see whether *the Things are so or no*. But
then

IV. *Lastly*, BE sure you receive whatever
appears so upon Examination, as the Word of
GOD. You must not, as I have just said, take
our Word for all we may deliver to you in
the Name of GOD, for it is very possible we
may mis-understand his Word, and mistake its
Meaning; but must examine what we teach,
and compare it with his Word. But then you
are under very strict Obligations to receive as
such, whatever appears to be the Word of
GOD upon Examination. See to it therefore
that every thing of this kind be received with
ready and firm *Assent* to the Truth of it, and
a thorough Persuasion of it in your Minds.

WITH the utmost Deference and Regard,
as the Word of unerring Wisdom, and uncon-
trollable Authority.

WITH the utmost Awe and Reverence,
Seriousness and Concern. Depend upon it that
when GOD speaks to his Creatures, it cannot
be about light and trivial Matters. His Words
must carry Weight with them, and challenge
the most serious Regard.

WITH Love and hearty Liking. As he
speaks with the Authority of a Sovereign, so
with the Tenderness of a Father, the wisest and

SERM. II. the kindest Parent. The Words he speaks to you, are ^f *Words whereby you may be saved.* He is laying open his own Counsels and Purposes of Love to you; he is laying before you the most proper and powerful Arguments in the World, to kindle Love to *him* in your Hearts. To hear such Things with Carelessness, Indifferency or Neglect, is undutiful to the last degree, and utterly indecent.

AND above all Things, look to it that you receive the Word of GOD, with Hearts all open to its Influence, that you may feel the Power of what GOD speaks to you by us his Ministers, and shew it forth in your Lives and Conversations. Do not satisfy your selves with mere hearing, or understanding, or a transient Relish and Liking of what you hear, but ^g *be ye Doers of the Word, that ye may be blessed in your Deed.*

IN a word, let the Word of GOD work powerfully in you. Let it not only inform the Understanding, and awaken the Conscience, but transform the whole Mind, and regulate and govern the whole Life and Conversation. Look to it that you feel its *purifying Virtue* in setting you against Sin, uniting you to Christ, and mortifying you to the World: Its *sanctifying Virtue* in transfusing the Spirit of the Gospel into you, in forming you to the Resemblance of the blessed GOD, and kindling up in you the Love of your Redeemer, the Life of GOD, and the lively Hope of the heavenly Inheritance: Nay, and its *comforting Virtue* and Power too, in giving you Peace with GOD, Joy in the Holy Ghost, and such relish-

^f Acts xi. 14.

^g James i. 25.

ing Foretastes of future Happiness, as may give ^{SERM. II.} you a Distaste of all the Vanities of the World, and an utter Abhorrence of all the Pleasures of Sin. In short, so receive the Word of GOD, as under its Influence to grow truly religious, and not altogether Strangers to the Pleasures and Delights which flow from pure Religion.

To this end, attend on the public preaching of the Word with Diligence; hear it with Attention, receive it with Love and good Liking, with Respect and Reverence; retain it in your Memories, frequently and seriously reflect upon it, and endeavour to impress the Sense of it on your Hearts; and above all things pray to GOD, that the mighty Influences of the Spirit of Truth and Holiness, may accompany the Word preached; that you may feel a Divine Virtue and Power going along with our Ministrations, and GOD owning his Truth in our Mouths, by transcribing it on your Hearts; that you may be ^h our Epistle not written with Ink, but with the Spirit of the living GOD.

MIGHTY Arguments urge to this. *Your own Interest.* Without this the Word of GOD will not only be preached to you in vain, and to no good Purpose, but to your greater Condemnation. ⁱ *It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for you.*

THE Honour of GOD. Unless you so receive his Word, you will greatly dishonour and provoke GOD, and be so far from making a grateful and expected Return for his Favour,

² Cor. iii. 3.

ⁱ Matth. x. 15.

SERM. I. in bestowing the Gospel on you, that you will be guilty of the most hateful Contempt of Him and his Grace.

LET me add, *Your Respect to us.* Otherwise you act the most unkind part to your Ministers that can be. We are willing to ^k spend, and be spent for you. We ^l travel in Birth to see Jesus Christ formed in you. And what is it we are seeking by our Prayers, by our Watchings, by our private Studies and public Labours, but your Sanctification and Salvation? How will it rejoice our Hearts, and open our Mouths in Thanksgivings to GOD, if you indeed receive his Word as you ought, and it work effectually in you? And what an Encouragement will it be to us in our Work? *Fulfil ye our Joy in being thus minded,* and do not grieve our Hearts, and weaken our Hands by your Neglect, or Contempt of the Word of GOD, your Obstinacy and Impenitence in sinful Courses, or your Unfruitfulness under the Means of Grace and our Ministry. *Amen.*

* 2 Cor. xii. 15.

^l Gal. iv. 19.





CHRIST *a Blessing to Jews and
Gentiles.*

A
S E R M O N

Preached in the OLD JEWRY,
December 25, 1716.

LUKE ii. 32.

*A Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the
Glory of thy People Israel.*



HIS Day of the Year hath been, SERM. II.
for many Ages, and in most Chri-
stian Nations, observed in Com-
memoration of the Birth and In-
carnation of our blessed Redeem-
er, and is revered by many as
an *Holy Day*. I know of no Authority given
to any Man, or Body of Men, to sanctify any
Day, or bring their Fellow-Christians under an
Obligation to own it holy, or observe it as

W such. Nor do we, by assembling together at this Season, or calling this great Event to Remembrance, in any wise, encourage those who would usurp this Authority, or claim this Power over their Brethren. It may indeed, for any thing I know, be in the Compass of every Man's private Power, to set apart such a Day for himself to a religious Purpose. As long as he lays no Burthen on his Brethren without Authority from their Common LORD, but acts only as the Judge and Master of his own private Acts, he may be accepted of GOD in such a *free-will Offering*. If he ^a regards a Day, let him regard it to the LORD, but let him not judge him who regardeth it not; for he may approve himself to the LORD, in not regarding it. It is to the LORD that he regardeth it not; as it is to the LORD that the other doth regard it: That is, one and the other may act out of a Principle of religious Regard to GOD's Honour or Command, and may be accepted of him. This I take to be the Scope of the Apostle's Reasoning in the Passage.

AND his Rule about all such indifferent Things is strictly to be observed; ^b *Let every Man be fully persuaded* in his own Mind, and ^c *not judge another*. Let them that venerate this Day as holy, be well persuaded in their own Mind about what they do, and observe it in an holy and religious Manner, and I would neither judge nor despise them, though I still assert my Christian Liberty, and would not willingly be brought under the Power of any, in those Instances wherein their LORD and mine hath left me free.

^a Rom. xiv. 6.^b Ver. 4.^c Ver. 10, 13.

A Discourse of our Redeemer will at all times be relishing to a Christian Spirit; and it may at all times be seasonable, though it be not so suitable, to a sinful Heart. But when Men have forgotten the original Purpose of such a Season, and give a Loose to themselves, instead of calling to Remembrance their vast Obligations to redeeming Love and Grace, it cannot but be seasonable, at such a Time, to endeavour to awaken in their Minds a Sense of what they owe to their Saviour, and lay some Restraint upon that unreasonable Indulgence they give themselves.

THE Words of my Text are part of the Song of Holy *Simeon*, on his first Sight of his Infant Redeemer. This good Man, had a Revelation from Heaven, that he should *not die till he had seen the LORD's Christ*; and being led by the Spirit into the Temple, when the Holy Child was presented there according to the Law, he breaks out into a Psalm of Praise, *Now lettest thou thy Servant, LORD, depart in Peace according to thy Word.*

“ The promised Time is come. Mine Eyes
 “ have been blest with the most desirable Sight
 “ on Earth. The long expected Saviour is
 “ born. I hold the dearest Pledge of my Ma-
 “ ker's Love in mine Arms, even him who
 “ was sent to be a Light to lighten the Gen-
 “ tiles, and the Glory of his People *Israel*.
 “ And now mine Eyes may close up in Peace:
 “ I have seen the most glorious Object that
 “ can be shewn to this inferior World, *The*
 “ *Word made Flesh*, the Saviour of Mankind :

SERM. II. " And now 'tis time to remove to that World,
 " where, in a little while, I shall see this glori-
 " ous Child enthron'd at GOD's right Hand,
 " and vested with all Power in Earth and Hea-
 " ven."

THE Words of the Text are assign'd, as the special Reason of his Triumph and Exultation, at the Sight of this Divine Person. The Office he was to bear, as Saviour, and the great Benefits he was to procure for Mankind, for both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, gave the good Man such exalted Satisfaction. This Saviour was to *be a Light* to the Heathen World, and *the Glory* of his own People.

IN discoursing from these Words, I shall

I. *First*, ENQUIRE in what respects Christ may be called *a Light to the Gentiles*.

II. *Secondly*, SHEW in what Sense he may be termed *the Glory of his People Israel*.

III. *Lastly*, MAKE Improvement.

I. *First*, I AM to enquire in what respects Christ may *be called a Light to the Gentiles*. And here, I think, I need not observe to you, that Light in this Passage is not to be taken in the most usual and proper Sense of the Word, for that which proceeds from the Body of the Sun, and every Day fills our Hemisphere. It is very common for us to speak of things spiritual, in Terms originally belonging to Things sensible. And GOD is pleased to speak to us in the same manner, though we must take care not to be misled in our Apprehensions, by his condescending to use such Language as the Infirmities of our present State in a great Measure render necessary. Our Saviour is a Light

in a spiritual and figurative Sense; as by a pro-^{SERM. II.}
 per Allusion to the most glorious among all
 sensible Beings, and its kindly Effects, he is
 termed *The Sun of Righteousness*. ^e *In him is*
Life, and that Life is the Light of Men. ^f *He*
is the true Light that lighteth every one who com-
eth into the World. ^h *The Day-spring from on*
high that hath visited us; To give Light to them
who sit in Darkness, and the Shadow of Death,
and to guide their Feet into the way of Peace.

WHAT *sensitive Light* is to the Eye, that
Knowledge or intellectual Light is to the Mind.
 And the same Term which is properly used to
 signify the first, as that which is first known,
 is, in a trelatitious Sense, used to signify the o-
 ther. And in this Sense may the Expression
 concerning our Saviour be understood in my
 Text. He is *a Light*, inasmuch as he spreads
 the true Knowledge of GOD through the *Pa-*
gan World.

BUT there is another Signification of the
 word *Light*, when applied to things spiritual,
 that is very usual in Holy Scripture, and de-
 serves to be taken notice of on this Occasion;
 I mean where it stands for *Delight* and *Joy*.
ⁱ *Truly, saith the Wiseman, Light is sweet,*
and a pleasant Thing it is to behold the Sun. And
 in this Sense, when pious Souls are made glad
 by their humble Confidence in GOD, their
^k *Faces are said to be lightned.* To the same
 purpose *David* calls GOD his ^l *Light and Sal-*
vation, as in another Place he terms him ^m *the*
Gladness of his Joy. And in the same Sense,

^e Mal. iv. 2. ^f John i. 4. |
^g Ver. 9. ^h Luke i. 78, 79. |

ⁱ Eccl. xi. 7. ^k Psal. xxxvi. 5,
^l Psal. xxvii. 1. ^m Psal. xliii. 4.

SERMON II. if I mistake not, is that Prayer of his to be understood, ^a *LORD, lift up thou the Light of thy Countenance upon me*, or by thy Grace and Favour make glad my Heart. And this will be more obvious still from the Opposition frequently put, in Holy Scripture, between Light and Darkness. ^o *I waited for Light*, saith Job in his Distress, *and there came Darkness*. The Man who ^p *walketh in Darkness, and seeth no Light*, is one overwhelmed with Fears and Grief, without any mixture of Peace and Comfort. In the same Sense the afflicted Church of Israel complains, ^q *He hath brought me into Darkness, and not into Light*. And the Church in Combat encouraging her self in GOD, saith, ^r *When I sit in Darkness, the LORD shall be a Light to me*: q. d. “When I am in the “forest Calamity, and the deepest Distress, He “shall be my Refuge and my Comfort.” And our Lord Jesus Christ is in this Sense also a *Light to the Gentiles*. I shall speak somewhat briefly to each of them.

I. *First, CHRIST is a Light to the Gentiles*, on account of that Knowledge in Matters of Religion, true Religion, which he diffuses among them. This is stiled in Holy Scripture, the ^s *Light of the glorious Gospel*; by this glorious Gospel, *we have the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of GOD, in the Face of our Lord Jesus Christ*. He sent forth his Apostles ^t *to open the Eyes of the Gentiles, and turn them from Darkness to Light*. And through his Blessing on their Endeavours, they had wonderful Success in this Work. The Gospel hath shone

^a Psal. iv. 6. ^o Job xxx. 26.

^p Esai. l. 10. ^q Lam. iii. 2.

^r Mic. vii. 8.

^s 2 Cor. iv. 4, 6.

^t Acts xv. 18.

to the very Ends of the Earth, and a very clear and bright Discovery is made thereby, of the most sublime and important Truths: So that they who sometimes were "*Darkness*, in this respect, *are now Light in the LORD*."

It would take up too much Time at present, to dilate on all the Particulars which might be mentioned to this Purpose, but it will be very proper to hint at the Principal. As for instance.

THE Knowledge of the true and living GOD, his Perfections and Relations to his Creatures, have been imparted by Christ to the Heathen World. About this their most celebrated Philosophers were very much in the Dark before. They did only ** Grope after GOD in the dark, if haply they might find him. † Because they did not glorify Him according to that Measure of Knowledge they had of Him, they became vain in their Imaginations, and their foolish Heart was darkened; and they changed the Glory of the incorruptible GOD, into an Image like to corruptible Man; nay, to Birds and four-footed Beasts and creeping Things, and thus they turned the Truth of GOD into a Lie. But when in the Wisdom of GOD, the World through Wisdom, i. e. vain and proud Pretensions to it, knew not GOD, it pleased him by the Foolishness of preaching, or a despised and plain Gospel, to save them that believe. And thus did he make foolish the Wisdom of the World. This Gospel, which the Pretenders to Science among them call'd Foolishness, gave a more satisfactory Account of the true Nature and Perfections of the Deity, even to the*

** Eph. v. 8. † Acts xvii. 27. ‡ Rom. i. 21, 23, 25.*

SERM. II.  most vulgar Persons who received it, than the most admired Philosophers had before. It would astonish a Christian, who is a perfect Stranger to it, to read over the Pagan Divinity. The Multitude of their GODS is incredible. *Varro*, according to the Report of St. ² *Austin*, counts up to Thirty Thousand. They had GODS for all Places and Things, for Countries, Cities, Families, Fields, Edifices, Gates, Weddings, Sepulchres, Trees, Gardens, Grain of all Kinds, for Heaven, Earth and Sea, for Mountains, Rivers, Fountains, Woods. Every thing was full of GODS. And many of these were very mean in themselves, and employ'd in very mean Offices. They not only deified the heavenly Bodies, Sun, Moon and Stars, but Oxen, Cats, Dogs, Serpents, nay, the very Passions of the Mind, and Diseases of the Body. The ^a *Romans* had a *Dea Puta* to take care of the pruning of Trees, a *Deus Nodutis* to knot the growing Straw, a *Dea Vibilia* to preserve from mistaking the Roads, a *Dea Mellonia* to take care of Honey, and preserve its Sweetness, a *Dea Rumina* to whom to commend sucking Children, a *Deus Vaticanus* to whom to commend them when they cried, a *Dea Pecunia* to make them rich, a *Deus Aesculanus*, and his Son *Argentinus*, whose Favour they were to bespeak, that they might have Store of Brass and Silver, a *Dea Potina* to provide them Drink, a *Dea Edulica* to give them Meat. Nay, they had a ^b *Dea Cloacina* to take care of their Common

^a De Civit. Dei.

Dei Lib. iv. Cap. viii. & xi.

^a Vid. Arnob. contra Gent.

^b Lact. Lib. i. Cap. 20, &c.

Lib. iv. August. de Civit.

Edit. Cantab.

Sewers, a *Deus Sterculius* to render the Dung SERM. II. cast on their Fields useful, a *Deus Terminus* to take care of their Boundings, not to mention many others that were appointed to Offices not fit to be named. They had GODS of different Sexes, and such Opinions current among them of their Amours, Whoredoms, Incests, Rapes, Debauches, Quarrels, Combats, &c. as would ^c shock any Mind that has a Sense of Virtue. These were indeed at first the Invention of their Poets, and have been censured by their Philosophers, but were Standard-Divinity among the Populace. And the Philosophers themselves, who censure these monstrous Opinions, were very much in the Dark as to the true Notions of the Deity, and were commonly Practicers of all the Idolatry and Superstitions of the Vulgar, and zealous Contenders for the Religion of their Country, or the superstitious, obscene, immoral and ridiculous Rites, with which these Deities were worshiped among them. Though they disowned these GODS in their Hearts, and could not but despise the Errors of the Vulgar, they fell in with them in Practice, and made the ^d best Excuse they could for such gross Con-

^c Nec enim multo absurdiora sunt ea: quæ Poetarum Vocibus fusa: ipsa suavitate nocuerunt: qui & irâ inflammatos & libidine furentes induxerunt Deos, feceruntq; ut eorum bella, pugnas, proelia vulnera videremus: Odia præterea Dissidia, discordias, ortus, interitus, querelas, lamentationes, effusas in omni intemperantiâ libidines, adulte-

ria, vincula, cum humano genere Concubitus, mortalesq; ex immortalibus procreatos Cic. de Nat. Deor. Lib. i. Omnia Diis attribuuntur quæ non modo in Hominem, sed etiam in contemptissimum hominem cadere possunt. Varro apud Augustin. de Civit. Dei. lvi. Cap. v.

^d Vid. Arnob. Lib. vi. & August. Lib. x. Cap. iii, iv, &c.

ceits

SERM. I. ceits in *them*, and such scandalous Compliances
 in *themselves*.

BUT now by the Gospel of Christ, we who were once in such dismal and horrid Darkness, have obtained the Knowledge of the true and living GOD, and are delivered from such thick and palpable Delusions; and the most common Christian, who is instructed in the Principles of Religion, has not only a truer Notion of GOD, than the common Heathens had heretofore, but than even their gravest and wisest Philosophers.

BY his Gospel also, we have the true Knowledge of *our selves*. We are taught the Original of our own Being, and the Nature of our own Minds: We are assured of their Immortality: Concerning all which the wisest and most vertuous among the Heathens, had very dark, perplexed and diffident Apprehensions. For which Reason our Saviour is said very properly to have brought *Life and Immortality to Light by the Gospel*.

BY the same Gospel is also made known to us, the true *Source* and *Original* of that Corruption and Pravity of human Nature, which the ^f wiser Heathens did perceive, but were strangely graveled to account for it. Seeing we are here assured that Man was formed after the Image of GOD: That ^g *He made Man upright, but they have sought out many Inventions, and that* ^h *by one Man's Disobedience Sin entred into the World, and Death by Sin.*

^a 2 Tim. i. 10.

^f Plato, Iamblichus, Plotinus, Maximus Tyrius, Hieronimus, &c.

^g Eccl. vii. 29.

^h Rom. v. 12.

BY this also we have the Knowledge of the SERM. I. Obligation and Extent of Divine Laws. Of these Things the wisest among the Heathens had very indistinct Notions, if they had any proper Knowledge at all. Indeed several of them speak very fine and pertinent Things about the Nature and Practice of Virtue, especially as to the Conduct of self, and Behaviour between Man and Man. But having left God out of their Scheme of Morality, at least to a very great Degree, they must have been much at a Loss, whence to derive the Obligations Men were under, to observe those Rules of Practice which they lay down. And in all their Writings little can be found that looks like a tolerable Account of the Duties of the first Table, or the Worship and Service to be rendered to God. They had hardly any Notion of the mutual Relation of Mankind to one another, by virtue of their natural Kindred, and Extraction from the same common Parents, nor therefore of the Duties flowing from it. And how much more perfect a Body of Morality, hath our Saviour delivered in one short Sermon, than can be collected from all the voluminous Writings of *Plato*, and *Aristotle*, and *Tully*, and *Plutarch*, and *Seneca*, with all their Boasts of superior Knowledge to the rest of Mankind, and all their Advantages?

WE are also by the same Gospel let into the Mystery which *was hidden from Ages and Generations*, the Undertaking and Offices of Christ himself. We have the Knowledge of God the Son, in the Function of a Mediator between God and Man, and as the great Reconciler of an Apostate World to an injured
and

SERM. II. and angry Sovereign. As the Priest by *whom*, and the Sacrifice by *which*, Atonement must be made for Sin, and the Conscience purged from *dead Works* to serve the living GOD. Indeed, the Doctrine of a *crucified Christ* was a *Stumbling-Block* to carnal *Jews*, who fondly expected their *Messias* would be a temporal Prince, to subdue the World, and set them at the Head of the Nations: And *Foolishness* to the *Greeks*, who turned this Doctrine into Ridicule, and laugh'd at a Deity dying as a Malefactor, and nailed to a Cross, though they had a thousand-fold more ridiculous Stories, with Relation to their own Deities, ⁱ and many whom they reckoned among this Number, that died by violent Hands. But to them ^k *who believe he is pretious.* ^l *The Wisdom of GOD, and the Power of GOD.* This is the most glorious Instance and Evidence of Divine Love and Condescension: The most powerful Attractive of our Wonder and Affection, and therefore the most powerful Motive to Repentance from Sin, and Obedience to GOD.

WE also know by his Gospel, the true and certain Terms of *our Reconciliation to GOD*, and *Acceptance with him*. We are not now left merely to guess in what way he may be appeased and rendred propitious to us, but have certain Knowledge that he is ready to be reconciled to us, upon our Acceptance of the gracious Proposals made to Sinners in the Gospel. The *Heathens* might know, that Repentance for Sin was a more proper Method to be restored to the Friendship of GOD, than the

ⁱ Vid. Arnob. Lib. 1. ^k 1 Pet. ii. 7. ^l 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

most costly Sacrifices, but they had no Assurance that upon sincere Repentance, they should be thus restored. They might find they were unable to vanquish and subdue their Appetites and Passions, by their own Power; but had very slight Encouragement to hope for the Succours of any Superior Power, of the Spirit of *Holiness*, to succeed their Attempts, and enable them to break off their Sins by Repentance. One of them could indeed say, *ⁿ Sine aliquo afflatu divino nullus vir bonus*, never was a Man made truly Good without some Divine *Afflatus*, or quickning Influence; but they had no Promise of any such *Afflatus* to encourage or succeed their Endeavours. But by the Gospel of our Redeemer we have Assurance, that sincere Repentance, in Connection with Faith in him, will entitle us to Pardon, and the Favour of GOD; and that he will give his Holy Spirit to every Sinner that is sincerely willing to be freed, by its Influences, from the Pollution and Power of Sin, and earnestly asks such a Favour at his Hands.

Finally, WE also by Christ know the Nature and Certainty of future Rewards and Punishments. Heathens had some imperfect Notices of this kind. They did not imagine Death would be an utter Extinction of their Being, but that their Spirits surviv'd their Bodies, and pass'd away as Shades to some other Regions. And many wild Things are said by their Poets of *Elysium* and *Tartarus*, the two Apartments of the invisible World; where the Dead were either in Happiness or Torture, according as they had behaved themselves whilst

SERM. II. they were alive. The Stone of *Sisyphus*, the Wheel of *Ixion*, the Rack and Vulture of *Tityus*, the Hunger and Thirst of *Tantalus*, the Whips and Torches of the Furies, are known to all who have dipt into the Heathen Story, as well as the opposite Entertainments of the *Elysian Fields*. But what Dreaming and Dotage is this, compared with the rational Accounts of the Gospel? The Rewards there promised are manly and divine, ^a *Rivers of Pleasure at GOD's Right Hand*, flowing from his Beatific Sight; and full Enjoyment and ^o *Joys that endure for ever*. The Threatnings there denounced are indeed terrible: The perpetual Anguish of a guilty Conscience, and Fire not to be quenched, kindled, and kept burning for ever by the Breath of Divine Wrath. How proper and powerful are these Arguments to enforce Religion? How rational and satisfying is this Account of the Invisible World, and the Retributions of a future State?

IN all these Instances hath the Gospel of our Saviour enlightened *the Gentiles*, and helped them to understand the Things of GOD, and of their own Souls; the Nature, and Grounds, and Rules of true Religion, and the proper Arguments, by which Men's Fears and Hopes are to be excited, to engage them to be truly religious. But

II. Secondly, CHRIST is a *Light to the Gentiles*, upon account of the Joy that he creates among them. It was prophesied concerning him, that in Him ^p *the Nations of the Earth should be Blessed*. And hath not the Event verified the Prediction? And should they not

^a Psal. xxxvi. 8.

^o Psal. xvi. 2.

^p Gen. xxii. 18.

now *break forth into Joy, and sing together?* SERM. II.

There is a great deal of pleasure and Rational Satisfaction that springs out of the foregoing Knowledge, and its genuine and proper Effects upon the Mind. To have a satisfying Account of the Nature of GOD, and the Relations in which he stands to his Creatures : To have a solid and well-grounded Persuasion of the Mind's Immortality, and its Capacity of eternal Bliss, are things delightful in themselves. Indeed, to know the Corruption and sad Degeneracy of Humane Nature, hath of it self nothing grateful in it ; yet to be able to trace it to its Source, and account for it, is not without its Satisfaction : But to discover the Remedy as well as the Distemper ; to be let into the secret Counsels of GOD, about the Redemption of Mankind, that was so long a perfect Mystery to the *Heathen* World, and very darkly known to the *Jews* themselves ; to be well informed of the Undertaking and Offices of the Son of GOD ; of the wise Methods of reconciling Mercy ; of the Terms on which Sinners may be forgiven, and restored to Divine Favour, may escape the Miseries of Hell, and secure the Happiness of Heaven : This is such a Light breaking in upon the Mind, as must give it ineffable Satisfaction and Delight.

BUT 'tis Pleasure more exalted still, when the Power of these Truths is felt upon the Mind, and it takes in their Influence. When Men find their Eyes and Hearts taken off from the World, and fixed on GOD and heavenly Things ; and the Spirit of the Gospel infused

SERM. II. into them, as well as the Light of the Gospel spread about them; this will give them indeed the truest and the highest Tastes of Pleasure. The very Design of Evangelical Light, is to direct Men in the Way to Heaven, and persuade them to be happy there for ever; and the external Revelation is accompanied with internal Helps and Influences from the Spirit of Christ, to fix the Heart on Heaven, to rejoice it with the Hopes of Heaven, and work it into a Meetness for that glorious World. And if we can find our Hearts made heavenly by the Light and Influences of the Gospel, must not this fill us with Joy, with some pleasing Anticipations of that Fullness of Joy that is above? There we are taught by our Saviour to expect perfect Intimacy with GOD, and perfect Satisfaction in our perfect Assimilation to him, and Enjoyment of him. Must it not be highly rejoicing then to find, that by the Gospel of Christ we are already brought into a State of Friendship and Acquaintance with GOD; into allowed Communion and Intercourse with Him; to some holy Resemblance of Him; and are, in the use of his appointed Means, growing up to the Perfection of a future Life?

AND doth the Gospel of our Saviour work such Effects among the *Gentiles*, those who once were ^r *without GOD in the World*? What a Change is here! and how apt, when attended to, to spring Joy in the Mind! to pass out of thick Darkness into glorious Light! from a State of Estrangement from GOD into Acquaintance with him! From a State of En-

^r Eph. ii. 12.

mity against him, into a State of Friendship! SERM. II.
 to rise out of the Dust, to shake off *an idolized*
 World, and take Wing towards Heaven; to
 leave even Clouds and Stars behind, and by a
 strong Faith, and lively Hope, penetrate with-
 in the Vail, enter the immediate Presence of
 the glorious GOD, and lay our Souls as it were
 in his Bosom! What can spring Joy in the
 Mind, if this will not? These are some of the
 glorious Effects of the Gospel of Christ among
 the *Gentiles*. And should not the News be
 told to a perishing World in a Rapture, and
 received with a Transport of Joy! *Quantum*
mutatus ab illo! What an Alteration is here in
 the State and Face of the Gentile World!
 Once they were *afar off*, now brought near:
 Once [†] *Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel,*
Strangers to the Covenant of Promise, and with-
out GOD, and without Hope in the World:
 now *Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of*
GOD's own Household. How should our Souls
magnify the LORD, and our Spirits rejoice in
GOD our Saviour? I proceed now

II. *Secondly*, To enquire in what Sense Christ
 may be termed *the Glory of his People Israel.*
 The *Jews* heretofore by a Covenant of Pec-
 liarity were the People of GOD, distinguished
 by this dear Relation from all the Nations of
 the Earth. But in the Writings of the New
 Testament, we read of another People of GOD,
 that are his *Israel* in a spiritual Sense. And this
 Distinction is very proper to be taken Notice
 of here. The Apostle *Paul* [†] lays it down for
 us. *All are not Israel*, saith he, *i. e.* in the

[†] Eph. ii. 12, 13, 19.

[†] Rom. ix. 6.

spiritual Sense, that are of Israel, i. e. the natural Descendants of Jacob. "They which are the Children of the Flesh, these are not the Children of GOD; but the Children of the Promise are accounted for the Seed, or Heirs to Abraham; for they are properly the Children of GOD, the People of GOD, the Israel of GOD, whose Glory Christ is; though 'tis also true, in many Respects, that he is the Glory of the ancient People of GOD the Jews. And it will not be amiss to consider this Matter in both these Views.

I. *First, HE is the Glory of the Jews, the natural Israel. This Expression is to be understood of somewhat that may commend them, honour them, or render them illustrious; and Christ was their Glory in this Sense upon many Accounts. He was so, as he accomplished the most remarkable Prophecies made to that People, and testified to their Inspiration. It was their peculiar Glory, that to * them were committed the Oracles of GOD. He was pleased at first to give them Laws by an audible Voice from Heaven; to settle a divine Polity among them by the Ministry of Moses, an extraordinary Prophet, and in many successive Generations to continue a Spirit of Prophecy among them. They had Kings and Courtiers among their Prophets, though sometimes Herdsmen were dignified with that Character. Now the great Scope of their Ministry (besides the giving particular Warnings and Directions to that People upon some special Occasions) was to explain the first great Promise of the Messiah, or Seed of the Woman, to keep up their Expecta-*

tions of him, and let them by Degrees more fully into the Nature of his Office and Undertaking. And our Saviour came into the World to accomplish those Prophecies, to fulfil this Promise, and thereby to bear Testimony to their Truth, and their being Divine. He set his Seal to them, and thereby carried the Notice of this great Privilege into the Heathen World, and confirmed the *Jewish* Revelations.

HE also hath given a rational and honourable Account of their Rites and Sacrifices. These Things, in their first and naked Appearance, without any regard to the Hints and References contained in them, seem a Bundle of burthensom, and many of them very childish Observances: A Medley of Rites that look better fitted to stifle and smother spiritual Religion, than to promote it. Such various Washings and Purgations, such costly and operose Sacrifices, such Niceties about the Place, and Time, and Ceremonies of Divine Worship, as seem to have no Foundation in the Reason and Nature of Things, no Fitness to please GOD, who is a spiritual Being, nor to promote true Devotion and Spirituality in Men. Why should GOD stamp Sanctity on such Observances, and bind them upon the Consciences of Men? This were a very puzzling Question indeed, without the glorious Revelation of the Gospel. But the main of their Sacrifices, and very many of their Rites, did plainly hint at the great Christian Sacrifice, and the Privileges of the Evangelical State. Why Sacrifices should be offered *then*, is made intelligible to us, by what we *now* know of the Sacrifice of Christ. To this

! Heb. ix. 13, 14.

SERM. II. they had Respect, and of this they were intended to give direct, though distant Hints. The several Apartments of the Tabernacle and Temple, the *Golden Censer* and *Altar of Incense*, the *Ark of the Covenant*, the *Mercy-Seat* and the *Cherubim* stretching their Wings over it, the Ceremony of the *High Priest's* going into the *Holiest of all* once a Year, were all References to the Evangelical State, and distant Hints of ² those Privileges, to which we are now admitted. And thus by Christ have we a *Rationale* of the *Jewish* Rites and Services. And is not this for the Glory of that People?

It was also glorious to them, that the Saviour of Mankind should be born a Member of their Community. The Apostle mentions this to their Honour, *Whose are the Fathers, and of whom, as concerning the Flesh, Christ came.* He who was the ^b *Desire of all Nations*, in whom all the *Nations of the Earth* were to be blessed, was by Birth a *Jew*; the most glorious and useful Man that ever was in the World, was their Country-man. Nay, he who was God-man, of kin to us all, as he partook of the same common Nature, was yet nearer of kin to them, as he was born among them, and one of their Brethren. And was not this for their Honour? Yet to this may be added, that though he was not that illustrious temporal Monarch which they expected, yet was he, in other Respects the most glorious Prince that ever sway'd a Scepter on Earth; whether we consider the *Extent* of his Dominion, reaching far beyond the Conquests of *Alexander*, or the

² Heb. ix. from Ver. 2. to 8. ^a Rom. ix. 5. ^b Hag. ii. 7.
more

more extended Limits of the *Roman World*: SERM. II.
 Or its *Duration*, 'tis a Kingdom that shall last
 out all Time: Or the *Privileges* of his Sub-
 jects, it is a Kingdom fitted by its Constitution,
 and designed in its Erection, to make all, that
 are faithful Subjects to it, truly, and for ever
 happy: Or finally, the *Carriage* and *Behaviour*
 of all who are properly his Subjects, who are
 all animated with Love and Devotion to him,
 and Zeal for his Interests, all heartily and chear-
 fully obedient to his Laws. To have such a
 King born among them, and go forth from
 them to conquer and subdue the World, was a
 real Glory to the *Jewish Nation*. But

II. *Secondly*, HE is much more the *Glory* of
 this *spiritual Israel*, those who are indeed the
 Children of GOD. It is much more solid
 Glory, and more important Honour they re-
 ceive from Him. He raises them to the high-
 est Dignity. He not only redeems them, and
 'washes them from their Sins by his own Blood,
 but makes them Kings and Priests to GOD the
 Father. He takes them into GOD's own Fa-
 mily, and dignifies them with the Title, and
 bestows upon them the Privileges of his 'Children.
 He makes them Heirs of an 'incorrupt-
 tible and heavenly Inheritance. 'If Children,
 then Heirs of GOD, and Joint-Heirs with
 Christ. He forms them, and gives them a
 Meetness for that happy Inheritance here on
 Earth, and gives them a joyful and abundant
 Entrance into it, when he calls them hence. Nay,
 he confers an higher Privilege, if possible, than
 this, by admitting them into the dearest Rela-

' Rev. i. 5, 6.

' John i. 12.

' Rom. viii. 16.

' 1 Pet. i. 4.

SERMON II. tion, and nearest Union to himself. They are Branches of him the *True Vine*, growing upon him, and living by him. They are *Members of his Body*. And his Body is not a mere political Confederation, united to him and one another by mere political Bands and Ties: It is a Body animated by his Spirit, as the Body of a Man is by his own Soul. He is their quickning Head, and they his living Members; and they live by the Influence of his Spirit. And what a Dignity indeed is this! to be *Bone of his Bone, and Flesh of his Flesh*! to be one with Him in some Respects, *as He and his Father are one. He dwelling in them, and they in Him.* What an Honour is this!

AND should not the *Children of Zion* be joyful in such a King? Should they not make their Boasts of such a Saviour, and triumph and glory in Him? Through *Him* they have Redemption and Forgiveness of Sins; through *Him* they recover the divine Favour and Likeness: Through *Him* they are taken into God's Family: By *Him* they are raised to the Hopes of the heavenly Glory and Inheritance: Nay, of his Body they are made living Members, and have his holy Spirit dwelling in them, and shedding Life and Light, and Love and Joy upon them. Is not this a Matter of the greatest Dignity and Honour, and should it not be Matter of the greatest Joy and Triumph? It remains now that I make some Use of what I have said: Which shall be done, only by laying before you some Advices founded on those Truths, which you would do well to follow, viz.

^a John xv. 1, 2. ^b Eph. v. 30. | ^c Psal. cxlix. 2.

^d John viii. 21, 22, 23. |

I. *First*, REJOICE in this Light, and be *thankful* for it. What a Privilege have we in the Light of the Gospel, and the Discoveries made to us by Christ, above what our Forefathers enjoyed in these Lands, above what the greatest Part of those who dwell on the Earth do to this Day enjoy? How many of the *Gentiles* to this very Day *sit in Darknes*, and the *Shadow of Death*? And never had the Dawning of that heavenly Light, that for many Ages hath shone forth upon us, and continues to shine out in Meridian Splendor? What a Difference hath the kind Providence of GOD made, in this Respect, between us and others, nay, between us and our own Progenitors? And should not this be Matter of great Joy to us? When the Angel from Heaven gave notice to the Shepherds of our Redeemer's Birth, he told them that he brought ¹ *good Tidings of great Joy that should be to all People*. And are not we among the People that should have a Part in this Joy?

BUT it is not enough to rejoice in this as a Privilege, we are to own it as the merciful Vouchsafement of a good GOD. Our Joy is therefore to rise up to Thankfulness, and grateful Acknowledgments to our gracious Benefactor. We are indebted to divine Goodness for this blessed Light, and these glorious Discoveries. And should we not rejoice in GOD, and praise him for this rich Vouchsafement. It is an Instance of distinguishing Mercy, that the Light of the Gospel shines about us. But if it hath shone into our Hearts, if we have felt any of its transforming and sanctifying Power,

¹Luke ii. 10.

SER. M. II. and have indeed an Evangelical and Christian Spirit, this is an additional Obligation, for which we should pay a Tribute of the most devout and hearty Thanksgivings. Let us look to it that we don't enjoy so great a Mercy without fit Resentments, nor without making due Acknowledgments to that great Source of Goodness, who lets forth his Streams so plentifully on us. Let us rejoice in the Light of the Gospel, and be thankful for it.

II. *Secondly*, IMPROVE this Light to its proper Purposes. It is in rich Mercy and great good Will to us, that this Light is afforded. It is to pursue the gracious Purposes of GOD towards fallen Creatures, and open a way for the *Gentiles* to trust in Him, and partake of the Blessings of his Evangelical Covenant. And when the Thoughts of GOD in such a Dispensation, are Thoughts of Love towards us, is it not our Interest and Duty, to shew a just Regard to our selves, and what a Sense we have of his Favour, by falling in with the merciful Purposes of it? When GOD hereby makes it appear that he wishes us well, should not we wish well to our selves, and endeavour to get all that Benefit from the Light of the Gospel, which it is, in its own Nature, and in the merciful Intention of GOD, fitted to convey to us, and procure for us? Let us not ^m *receive this Grace of GOD in vain*. Let it be improved by us to the Glory of GOD, that he may receive Honour from us upon account of so rich a Vouchsafement. Let us look to it, that by this *Word of Reconciliation*, we be indeed reconciled to GOD, and become acquainted with

Him. Seeing we are by this Light directed to SERM. II. the Way, the sure Way wherein to obtain the Pardon of Sin, and the Favour of GOD, wherein to be made like Him, and admitted to Friendship and Fellowship with Him: Let us not continue Strangers and Enemies to him by wicked Works, and thereby shew Contempt of our own Souls, and his wonderful Grace and good Will towards us. Let us make the proper Use of our glorious Mediator, that by his Merits and Intercession we may be recommended to GOD, and by the Influence of his Spirit, and the Light of his Word, we may be brought into the Way of Salvation, brought into Subjection to the Authority of GOD, and safely conducted to eternal Life. Let the eternal and incorruptible Inheritance brought to Light by him, be our chosen Portion. Let our Hearts settle there, and whilst we ⁿ *deny all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and live soberly, righteously and godly in this present World:* Let us look for the blessed Hope and the glorious Appearance, and the eternal Enjoyment of our blessed Saviour. In a Word, let us ^o *walk in the Light we enjoy, and walk as the ^p Children of the Light and of the Day, not of the Night, nor of Darkness.*

III. *Thirdly, PITY those who want this Light, and pray for them.* The obstinate Jews, who were once GOD's peculiar People, but have long ago put off their Glory, and by crucifying Christ, and rejecting the Prince of Peace, have brought *the Wrath of GOD upon them to the uttermost*, and remain to this Day a dispersed and fugitive People, not only without

ⁿ Tit. ii. 12, 13. ^o 1 John i. 7. ^p 1 Thess. v. 5.

SERM. II. the peculiar Marks of GOD's Favour, which once they had, but under very visible Tokens of his Displeasure and Vengeance. Let us compassionate their Case. *The Glory is quite departed from them.* And let us shew our Pity, by recommending them with earnest Cries and Prayers to GOD, that he would shew Mercy to the *Remnant of his People*, and remove that *Blindness that hath happened to Israel*, and hasten on the Time when all Israel shall be saved; that ^a as the casting away of them was the reconciling of the World; the receiving them again may be as Life from the Dead. And in order hereto, let us pray that the ^b Fullness of the Gentiles may come in. How many of them, are to this Day ^c Strangers to the Covenant of Promise; Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel; without GOD and Christ, and therefore without Hope in the World; sit in Darkness; and see no Light, nothing at all of the Light of the Gospel, and but such imperfect Glimmerings of natural Light, as are much nearer to Night than Day? How deplorable a Condition is theirs, how loudly doth it call for our Pity? And can we express due Love to our Fellow-Creatures; and Concern for them; or due Regard for the Honour of our Redeemer, without pouring out our Prayers to GOD, and pleading with him, that to them also a Saviour may be made known; and that he would vouchsafe them *Repentance to Life*; that they may have much Matter on their own Account to glorify GOD, and we on their Behalf?

^a Rom. xi. 15. ^b Ver. 25. ^c Eph. ii. 12.

IV. *Fourthly*, LET us heartily endeavour SERM. II. that this Light be more generally diffused. Let us do what is in our Power to spread it through the World. Alas! how many are there, even amongst us in these Lands, who remain as ignorant of GOD, and the great things of the Gospel, as the Heathens themselves? and *sit in Darkness, and the Shadow of Death*, notwithstanding so glorious a Light shines round about them? And how many Nations of the World never yet heard the glad Tidings of Salvation? And might not Christian Princes and States, Christian Bishops and Ministers, nay, Christians in private Stations, do much more towards removing the Blindness and Ignorance of the Christian World, and the carrying Evangelical Light into the Heathen World than is commonly done? Let every one of us, according to our several Abilities, heartily encourage all Endeavours to spread the Knowledge of the LORD to the Ends of the Earth. Let us, in our several Stations, endeavour to promote Christian Knowledge, among them that bear the Christian Name. Let us carefully instruct those who are under our Care, whether Children or Servants. Let us countenance, and encourage, and assist the faithful Ministers of Christ, who are appointed of GOD for the more general Diffusion of this Light among the People. In a Word, let us do all we can, to make it appear, that we are thankful to GOD for such a Mercy our selves, that we have true and tender Compassion for those who want it, and are willing to do what we can that they may enjoy it.

V. And *lastly*, LET us make it appear to our selves and the World, that Christ is our
Glory.

SERM. II. Glory. Not barely by calling his Name upon us, or glorying in the Title of Christians: Not by an immoderate and feavourish Zeal for our own particular Notions and Practices, or our own particular Sect and Party, by whatever venerable or sacred Name we dignify it: But, by frequent and serious Contemplations of his Glories. Every part of his Administration, even the lowest Abasement of the Son of GOD, is glorious to an Eye of Faith; how much more his Triumphs, his Majesty, his Sovereignty, and all the Dignity and Pomp of his exalted State? Let our Thoughts often dwell on this glorious Subject; often let us behold the Glories of GOD in the Face of Christ, and consider with Wonder and Pleasure, how all the Attributes of GOD shine forth, and recommend themselves by this Dispensation. Let us manifest that our Redeemer is our Glory, by having his *high Praises* much *in our Mouths*; by pouring out the most grateful Acknowledgments at his Feet, by devoting our selves to his Service; by sacrificing our petty Interests to his Honour, and by recommending him to the World as the most powerful, and faithful, and merciful Saviour, by our Lives and Conversations. Let us heartily and chearfully submit to his Commands, live in Obedience to his Laws, and make it our sincere Endeavour in all we do to please him; and never turn his Grace into Lasciviousness, nor take Sanctuary in his Name, and pretend to honour him by trusting to his Merits and Righteousness, when we slight his Authority, and live in notorious Disobedience to his holy Laws.

AND at such a Time as this, in a particular Manner, let us not encourage or allow our selves

SELVES in licentious Behaviour, or in any sensual SERM. II.
 Excesses, whilst we pretend to commemorate
 to his Honour the *Birth* and *Incarnation* of the
 Son of GOD. As this Season is commonly
 observed even among Christians, one would ra-
 ther think it a Festival in the Calendar of *Pa-*
gan Rome, the very Counter-part of their *Sa-*
turnalia, than a Christian Institution. So much
 do Men indulge their Vices, and gratify their
 Sensuality more than at other times, and shake
 Hands with every Thing grave and serious.
 Let us avoid this too common Practice, and
 look to it, that we do not reproach our Reli-
 gion, by a pretended Celebration and honou-
 rable Remembrance of one of the most glori-
 ous Facts recorded in Scripture-History: But
 now, and at all times, let it be our Endeavour
 in *" all Things, to adorn the Doctrine of our*
GOD and Saviour by our Conversation, and to
 give no occasion to *the Enemy to blaspheme*, nor
^x any Offence to Jew, or Gentile, or the Church
of GOD.

** A Feast observed in the Month of December, in Honour of Saturn, the imaginary Sire of the Pagan Deities. When not only all Bounds of Distinction were taken down between Masters and Servants, but a Loose was given to all kind of vicious Behaviour; inasmuch*

*that, as Lucian tells us, for seven Days it was not allow'd for any to meddle with any serious Business, *πένθες δὲ καὶ παύσας τοῦ σώματος*, but to revel and drink, and make a Noise. Luc. Epist. Saturn. in Saturnal.*

^u Tit. ii. 10.

^x 1 Cor. x. 32.





Living and dying to the LORD.

A

S E R M O N

Preached in the *OLD JEWRY*,
January 1, 1717.

R O M. xiv. 8. the former part.

*For whether we live, we live to the
LORD, and whether we die, we die
to the LORD.*

SERM. III.



WE are this Day, according to common Account, entring upon another Annual Revolution of Time. Since we last met together on such a Day, many of us have carried out our dearest Relatives to their Funerals; We all have seen Multitudes of our Friends, Neighbours and Acquaintance laid up in their Graves, and called out of our World to give up their Accounts. Who of us shall live, till
such

such a Season revolves, is utterly unknown. It SERM. III.
is very probable, if not very certain, that many of us shall be dead, and departed to another World, before the next Year commences. And those of the most youthful and florid Countenances, and of the most hail and vigorous Constitutions, have no more Assurance of out-living this Year; than those whose Faces are wrinkled, or their Strength consumed by Age, or tarnished and enfeebled by a sickly Constitution. It is therefore very proper for every one, to expect this Change, and make ready for it. And the best way in the World to do this, is, to make our Lives a Comment on the Text, I have read to you.

I shall not detain you with the Connexion between this and the foregoing Part of the Chapter, or the Scope of the Apostle's Argument; because the Text, as it lies by it self, is crowded with Matter, and must be slightly gone over at best, within my Compass of Time. My Business from the Words will be

I. *First*, To shew, what is meant by *Living to the LORD.*

II. *Secondly*, WHAT by Dying to the LORD.

III. *Thirdly*, THE mutual Connexion there is between these *two*, and their dependence on each other, and then.

IV. *Lastly*, To apply all with special Regard to the Season.

Of these in their order. And

I. *First*, I am to enquire what *Living to the LORD* imports. The Title *Lord* is very commonly given in the New Testament to our

SERM. III. *Saviour.* It is in a manner appropriated to him. *To us there is one GOD the Father, of whom are all Things, and one LORD Jesus Christ, by whom are all Things.* And it may very justly and properly be said, that *to him we live and die.* But whether the Term in the Text be to be understood of our Redeemer, or of GOD absolutely considered, the Meaning will be much the same. I shall lay before you, what I apprehend to be the Sense of the Expression, in the following Particulars.

I. *First, LIVING to the LORD implies, Acknowledgment of his Property in us, and Dominion over us.* This in the last Clause is plainly expressed, *whether we live or die, we are the LORD's.* All we have belongs to him, we our selves are his absolute Property. He is Lord of us by original Claim and Right, ^a *he made us, and not we our selves.* We owe our Being to no other Cause but his Almighty Will, whatever Instrument might be employed in our Production. For this Reason, both our Persons, and all our Powers of Mind and Body, must be his. He who made them, must have Property in them; they must belong to Him. And he is our Proprietor by a new Right of Purchase. ^b *We are not our own, for we are bought with a Price,* even our ^c *Redeemer's Blood:* And upon both Accounts we are wholly his. Our vital and animal Powers, and our intellectual Faculties belong to him, in a Manner the most absolute and unlimited. They are much more his than ours: Nor were they put into our Possession, to use them for our

^a Psal. c. 3.

^b 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

^c 1 Pet. i. 18.

selves, but for *Him*; not according to *our own* Pleasure, but *his*. And we can never *live to him*, till we make Acknowledgment of his Right to our Lives, to our whole Being, and to all we have. This must be laid at the Foundation of this Duty, whatever more is implied in it. We must be convinced and persuaded in our selves of the Right GOD hath in us, and make open Acknowledgment of it, and that with Understanding, Readiness and Sincerity, fully, and without Limitations or Restrictions. And it must be a *practical Acknowledgment*, such as will deeply affect our Hearts, and have a good Influence upon our whole Conduct. We should know what we do, when we make such an Acknowledgment, and for what Reasons we do it; we should be hearty and chearful in it, full and unreserved, and must yield up our whole Souls to the Influence of such a Conviction as this, *that we belong to GOD*; and be willing that it should excite the proper Affections in our Minds, and produce such a Temper of Spirit, and Course of Behaviour, as will suit with the Acknowledgment and Profession we make. He can never live to GOD, who is not convinced in his Mind, and ready to confess that he belongs to GOD; but there may be a Persuasion of this Truth that is slight, and doth not command in the Mind, the Force and Virtue of which the Heart is not willing to feel. Now such a slight and powerless Conviction will never issue in a Compliance with the Duty here mentioned. It must be deep and strong, such as will reach the Heart, and awaken and engage every Power of the Mind, and manifest this Virtue and Influence in the whole Conduct of Life. But

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II. Secondly, UPON this must be a *Dedication of our selves*, to his Service and Pleasure. And this Surrender of our selves, is to be made immediately to *Christ Jesus the Lord*, considered as Mediator between GOD and Man, and by his Mediation unto GOD himself. For in the present Condition of our Nature, no Man can be convinced of GOD's Property in him, but must at the same time be deeply convinced, that in many and heinous Instances he hath wronged GOD by living alienated from Him, and acting as if he were his own Property, or the Property of another Master. And this Conviction must fill the Mind with Shame and Confusion, and dreadful Expectations of divine Displeasure and Vengeance, under which the Man can have no sure Relief, but by the Gospel of Christ, and the Mediation of GOD the Son in human Nature. This is the principal and peculiar Doctrine of the Gospel, the fundamental Principle in Christianity. This is *the Person* appointed by GOD himself, to mediate between him and his sinful Creatures, and make up the Breach. And the *Gospel*, in its properest Sense, is the Scheme of Reconciliation, or the way wherein it is to be effected and maintained.

NOW by this Scheme GOD doth not think fit to treat immediately, and in his own Person, with his sinful Creatures; neither to make Tenders of Mercy, and Overtures of Peace and Amity, nor to accept their Acknowledgments, Submissions, and Surrender of themselves upon Conviction they are his: But he doth all this by the Mediator, who is Agent between Him and his sinful Creatures in this Affair. So that this Dedication of our selves

to GOD upon Acknowledgment of his Pro-^{SERM. III.}perty in us, must, as I have said, be immediately made to the Mediator, and by his Mediation to GOD himself. We are to offer our selves to the Service and Pleasure of GOD by Jesus Christ; or with an Intention, that what we offer to him, should by him be offered up for us to GOD, and rendred acceptable to Him by his Recommendation.

AND this carries in it a plain Hint, that our former Alienation of our selves from GOD must be confessed, lamented and bewailed, must be detested and abhorred; nay, that we should loath and abhor our selves for it, when we offer our selves up to GOD by Christ. For what need of such a Reconciler, if GOD had not been injured by us, and angry with us? And what can be more injurious or provoking, than for his Creatures to live alienated from him? And do we make Acknowledgment of having done thus, when we yield our selves up to GOD by Christ; and shall we do it without Remorse and Horror, without Displeasure against the Sin, and against our selves for it? Will GOD admit those to Favour, or Christ recommend them to Forgiveness and Acceptance with GOD, who shew so little Regret for past Offences? This were not decent for Him to do, and is vain and unreasonable for Us to expect.

NAY this Surrender of our selves to GOD, must also be attended with thankful Acknowledgment of the Mediator in his great reconciling Office, and Acceptance of him as the only Mediator between GOD and us, and that upon his own Terms; as our Saviour from ignorance and evil Inclination, from the Power of Sin, and the Tyranny of Lust, as well as

SERM. III. from the Wrath and Vengeance of GOD, deserved by Sin.

IN this Dedication of our selves to GOD, we must also disavow and renounce every other Lord and Owner, and deliver our selves, *Soul, Body and Spirit* over to him, with a declared Purpose to look on our selves henceforth as his, and not our own, and to use and employ our selves, and all we have, for Him, and not for our selves, or any other Lord and Master whatsoever. Though other ^d *Lords have had Dominion over us*, they must be utterly disclaimed, we must call him the *LORD our GOD*, make mention of his Name, and call our selves by it. Thus must we, upon full Conviction of his Right in us, deliver our selves up to GOD, to be at his Disposal and Command without Limitation or Reserve; and that after due Deliberation, with the greatest Sincerity, nay, with the greatest Readiness and Pleasure, and not for a Time only, but for ever. If our Saviour, if our GOD have any Right in us, it is Absolute, and without Limitation; if at any time, he has at all times. And ^e *this GOD should be our GOD*, and we should be his People, even for ever and ever. Again,

III. *Thirdly*, THIS must be followed with a suitable *Conduct and Conversation*. We must live and act as those that belong to GOD, and that both of Right, and by voluntary Cession and Surrender. Indeed, this free Yielding our selves to GOD gives him no Right in us, which before he had not. It is but a practical Acknowledgment of his original and unlimited

^e Esai. xxvi. 13,

^f Psal. xlviii. 14.

Right in us, and Claim to us. Yet must we SERM. III. be voluntary and free in this Surrender, otherwise it cannot be our own Act. It is not a Cession made by Us, and therefore can never influence us to a suitable Conduct and Conversation afterward, which is *Living to GOD* in the most proper and restrained Sense, viz. living as it becomes those, who have made hearty Acknowledgment of GOD's absolute Right in them, and have yielded themselves up to his Pleasure and Service. And this general Account would branch out into a great variety of Particulars, had I Time to go over them all; but I must content my self with hinting at the Principal. And in order to this I think it proper to observe, that the Life of Man is common to all his Powers, vital, animal and intellectual; but the last being the noblest and *their* Life the most perfect, they should direct the rest in their Exercises and Operations, at least as far as they can. And whatever Actions of the Man are under the Conduct of his intellectual Powers, are commonly called *human Actions*; and all such are comprehended in this Life, even bodily Actions as well as those of the Mind. Living to GOD implies thinking, speaking, acting for GOD, or as those should do, who are given up to his Pleasure and Service.

AND in this comprehensive Sense we are required to *make the Glory of GOD the great End of Living.* ^f *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the Glory of GOD.* Whatever you do that may be directed to an End, let it ultimately tend hither. This is the great

^f 1 Cor. x. 31.

SERM. III. Design in view to every one who lives to
 GOD.

LIVING to GOD also implies being entirely at *his Disposal*. The Language of his Heart, and all his Actions, who lives in this manner, is, Lord & *here I am, do with me what seemeth good in thy Sight.* ^h *Not my Will, but thine be done.* For such unlimited disposal of Property is certainly implied in what is absolute and unlimited. And he who owns such a Right in GOD, must consent to his exercising it.

It also implies living *under his Government and Command*, or acting in all Instances as one who is willingly subject to GOD, pleased with being under his Command, and obliged to act according to his declared Pleasure. He who lives to GOD, must not merely bear his Government as a Load, and submit against Inclination whilst he hates the Laws by which he acts; no, this is in effect to renounce and throw off his Government. He disowns GOD's Command, who is not freely subject to it. Every one who heartily owns it, likes to live under it; esteems it a Privilege, and not a Burthen, to be obliged to yield Obedience to the Laws of GOD. For he ⁱ *esteems every one of his Commands in every thing to be right.*

It also implies *labouring diligently in his Service*. He who lives to GOD, looks upon him to be his Master, whose Work he is to do, and to whose Will he is to conform himself. He makes it his Business therefore to know his Master's Will, and when it is known, sets about the Work to be performed with Dili-

^g 2 Sam. xv. 26. ^h Luke xxii. 42. ⁱ Psal. cxix. 128.

gence and Delight. He is willing to take SERM. III. Pains to know it, and willing to know it for this End, that he may do it. He doth not think that the Knowledge of his Master's Will, or the Pains he takes to acquire it will excuse from Performance, and much less will he make wilful Ignorance such an Excuse: But he both searches out what is the *acceptable Will of GOD*, and sets himself to perform it, and that with his ^k *whole Heart*. Nay, if he be a Servant of Men, he is obedient to his Masters, and doth their Work with good Will, ^l *as doing Service to the LORD*. And indeed it is Love to GOD, as a Governor and Master, that must be the great Principle of our Obedience and Service. ^m *If ye love me, keep my Commandments.* ⁿ *He who loveth me, will keep my Words.* And ^o *this is the Love of GOD, that we keep his Commandments.*

LIVING to GOD implies also *carrying on a War against his Enemies*. As we are to employ all our Powers for the Glory of GOD, and in his Service, so also are we to use them against his Enemies: And that because they are his Enemies, though at the same time they are ours also, and should be opposed as such; whether they are within us, or without us, the sinful and corrupt Inclinations of our own Hearts, or the Snares of the World, and Temptations of the Devil. But we are especially to oppose, and use our utmost Endeavours to mortify our own sinful Inclinations, the Traytors in our own Bosoms, that join with the Enemies from without, and entice us into Sin, and give them

^k Ver. 6, 9. ^l Col. iii. 23.

^m John xiv. 15.

ⁿ John xiv. 23.

^o 1 John v. 3.

SERM. III. the greatest Advantages against us, and render us the more unable to deal with them. In this Sense the Apostle advises us to *p mortify our Members which are upon the Earth*, and talks of *q mortifying the Deeds of the Body that we may live*. And finally,

It implies living on the *Faith and Hope of heavenly Things*; looking for the *Recompence of the Reward* which GOD hath promised, and living under the Influence of this Expectation. This is the grand Motive and Encouragement to true Religion, proposed in the Gospel. To the Hope of this *r Inheritance are true Christians begotten*. If they are *s risen with Christ to Newness of Life*, they seek the Things above. And the great Principle, by which they are carried through all their hard Services and sharp Sufferings, is that Faith which is *t the Evidence of Things not seen, and the Substance of Things hoped for*. *u By this Faith they live*. There is, there can be no plainer Discovery of our Living to GOD, than to have our *x Treasure and our Hearts in Heaven*, and to seek that Kingdom in the first place, or with principal Diligence and Concern. For there, and there only, the Christian expects to live perfectly to GOD, to fill up this Character, and act at all Times, and in all Instances, as one given up to him absolutely, and without any Reserve. But in the last Place,

IV. Fourthly, LIVING to GOD implies Persevering in this Course, or proceeding con-

^p Col. iii. 5.

^q Rom. viii. 13.

^r 1 Pet. i. 4.

^s Col. iii. 1.

^t Heb. xi. 1.

^u Heb. x. 38.

^x Matth. vi. 19, 20, 21;

stantly in it to the last Gasp of Life. When SERM. III. we yield our selves to GOD, if we are sincere in what we do, it is not for a limited Time, but for ever. His Right to us is unlimited in all Respects. It is perpetual for Duration, as well as absolute in Extent. And we do not acknowledge it at all, if we are not full in our Acknowledgment. It is not his Right, if it be not absolute and perpetual. And our Obligation to live to Him, must bear Proportion to the Right he hath in Us; for this Right is the Ground, and must be the Measure of our Obligation, at least as far as we have Power to answer it. It is not therefore enough to enter upon such a Way, and Course of Life, but we must proceed and persist in it. It is, and it is to be esteemed by us, the very Business of our Lives.

NAY, it will be the Business of a future Life, our Work and Employment throughout Eternity, if we are now alive to GOD. When we have past the Bounds of this Life, and are entred upon the invisible World, we shall much more fully, and much more perfectly *live to GOD*, than we can do here, as I hinted a little above. Heaven is not a State of Inactivity, but of the most vigorous Exercise. There can be no Enjoyment, where there is no Life, and the Measure of Enjoyment must be as the Life and Vigor exerted in it. If GOD be therefore to be enjoyed in Heaven, this must infer Life and Exercise. And however relishing this Enjoyment shall be, it must be such as is fit for GOD to allow a Creature; who can never be raised above the Rank of a Subject, or a State of Subjection to divine Command. GOD must therefore be served and obeyed by glorified

SERM. III. glorified Souls, and by *the Spirits of the Just made Perfect*. And their Felicity will indeed flow from the Perfection of their Duty and Obedience, and hold Proportion to the Vigor and Activity with which they are performed. So that the heavenly State will be a perfectly happy one; because there Christians will be grown up to a Perfection in Duty and Obedience, and will live to **G O D** in the highest Sense.

W I T H this View are we to enter upon the Christian State, and Work, and Warfare, and with a Purpose therefore of holding on to the very End. For he only ^y *who endureth to the End shall be saved*. We must ^z *be faithful to the Death, if we would obtain a Crown of Life*, and ^a *finish our Course before we can receive the Crown of Righteousness*. As long as we live we must keep on in this Course. ^b *If any Man draw back, my Soul, saith G O D, hath no Pleasure in him*.

N O R must we only persevere, but endeavour to go forward, and ^c *abound in the Work of the L O R D*; must every Day be more mortified to Sin, and live more fully to **G O D**. For after the highest Attainments of the present Life, and the utmost Progress in Christianity, there will be still much Room for Improvement. And we should stint our selves at no Measure short of Perfection, the Perfection of the heavenly State. And thus have I shewn you briefly, what it is *to Live to the L O R D*. I proceed,

^y Matth. x. 22.

^z Rev. ii. 10.

^a 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

^b Heb. x. 38.

^c 1 Cor. xv. 58.

II. *Secondly*, To enquire what is implied in *SERM. III. Dying to the LORD.* And this I shall also lay before you in a few Particulars. There is a figurative Sense of dying in the holy Scriptures, which is not I think meant here, and yet it may be proper to hint to you concerning it, that it may be called *Dying to the LORD.* To this Purpose we read of *being^d Dead to Sin*, which is otherwise called *being^e Dead with Christ.* We read also of *being^f crucified to the World*, that is, growing indifferent to the Enjoyments or Evils of this Life, or quenching sinful Appetites and Passions in us. Now if we die in this manner, it must be *to the LORD.* It must be for his Honour, and must be also the Product of sincere Love to him. We can never die to Sin, and to the World, till we have given our selves up to *G O D*, and heartily acknowledge his Right, and purpose in our Hearts, and endeavour with all our Might, to live as those that make these Acknowledgments. But this metaphorical Dying is not what the Apostle intends in our Text, and therefore I shall insist no farther on it. As living here is to be understood of our spending the time of Life to the Honour of *G O D*, and in his Service, dying is to be understood of yielding up our Breath and Spirits, and this also must be *to the LORD.* Now that we may thus *die to the LORD*, it is necessary

I. *First*, *THAT we hold Life at G O D's Pleasure.* He who is Lord over all, must have the Power of Life in his own Hands. *& No Man*, saith the Preacher, *hath Power over the*

^d Rom. vi. 11. ^e Ver. 8. ^f Gal. vi. 14. ^g Eccl. viii. 8.

SERM. III. *Spirit to retain the Spirit.* He who is the Author of Life, is the only Lord of Life. And he is Lord of Life, with full and absolute Dominion over it. This Dominion he may exercise as he pleases, unless he thinks fit to limit his Exercise by any free Promise to his Creatures. In this Case they hold Life by virtue of his Promise, and upon such Conditions as he is pleased to specify, when he makes the Promise. Thus our first Parents held Life, upon Condition of their Abstinence from the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.* ^h *In the Day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.* But since their Apostacy all Mankind have forfeited Life by being Sinners against GOD. So that he takes Life away now as an Act of Justice, rather than in the Exercise of Sovereign Dominion.

Now those who die to the LORD, heartily acknowledge his Power over Life, by virtue of his unlimited Dominion, and that forfeiture which they have made by Sin; and they heartily consent he should use that Power he has, and take away their Lives when he pleases. Indeed, all Mankind have a love of Life, and an horror of Death, worked into their very Constitution. These can't wholly be put off, as is plain from our Saviour's Prayer, ⁱ *if it be possible let this Cup pass from me.* Nor is it therefore expected, that the Saints of GOD should be without all Reluctance against dying. But in all who truly live and die to him, a superior Principle will prevail over this Reluctance, though it do not wholly take it away; so that they can say after their Saviour, ^k *if*

^h Gen. ii. 17.ⁱ Matth. xxvi. 39.^k Ver. 42.

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this Cup may not pass away from me except I SERM. III:
drink it, thy Will be done. And they are content he should determine at what Time, and in what Place, and by what Means they shall leave Life, and remove to another World. And when his Time is come, they die submitting themselves to his Pleasure, and yield up their Breath with an Acknowledgment, that he is Lord of Life, and may take it away without the least Injury to them. But dying to the LORD implies,

II. *Secondly*, THAT if we are called to it, *we should die for his sake.* In this Sense every Man is required to ^l *hate his own Life*, who would be Christ's Disciple. Without this, *saith he, he can't be my Disciple.* Not that our Saviour would have that Love to Life, which is Nature and Constitution in every Man, utterly extinguished in us. He is to be understood in a comparative Sense, not of positive and proper Hatred of Life, but of loving something better, that is to say, the Truth, and Interest, and Honour of our Redeemer. He who, at the Expence of any, or all these, ^m *would save his Life, shall certainly lose it.* He may escape a temporal Death, and preserve a bodily Life by it, but he shall lose his Soul, and suffer Death eternal. But ⁿ *he who hateth his Life in this World, shall keep it to Life eternal.* He, who, for Christ's sake, is content to part with his bodily Life, shall certainly preserve his Soul, and inherit the heavenly Glory. Thus to die plainly argues, that we hold Life at the good Pleasure of GOD. For it is his

^l Luke xiv. 26.

^m Matth. xvi. 25.

ⁿ John xii. 25.

SERM. III. Pleasure that we should freely part with Life, when we can't preserve it, and maintain our Integrity, *or keep a good Conscience.* Upon such Terms we should not *count our Lives dear to us,* but yield them up by whatever Hands, and in whatever Way they may be taken from us. This is *dying to the LORD* indeed. It is making a Sacrifice of Life to his Honour. It is yielding up Life at his Pleasure in the strongest Sense.

WHEN we die worn out with Age, or by the Attacks of a mortal Distemper, we yield what we can hold no longer. But when it is in our Option to live, if we would part with a good Conscience, or disown or dishonour our blessed Redeemer, and we chuse to die, rather than live upon these Terms, this is giving up for his Sake, and at his Command, what was in a sort in our own Power. This is *dying to him* indeed, because it is giving up, *for Him,* what we might have preserved, if we had not preferred his Honour and Interests much before it, and loved our Duty better than our Lives. But

III. *Thirdly,* DYING to the LORD, implies dying *to be with the LORD.* Dying in this View and Hope, that we shall *be ever with the LORD.* This Hope is the Christian's great Support, under the Thoughts of Death. He knows that though it will shatter the earthly Tabernacle to pieces, and reduce his outward Man to Dust, yet 'twill only waft his Soul to a better World. *¶ We know,* saith the Apostle, *that when this earthly*

2 Acts xx. 24.

¶ 1 Theff. iv. 17.

3 2 Cor. v. 1, 5.

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House of our Tabernacle shall be dissolved, we SERM. III.
have a Building not made with Hands, eternal
in the Heavens. And we are willing to be ab-
sent from the Body, and present with the LORD.
And this he speaks in the name of Christians
in general. Elsewhere he saith of himself, that
he had a ^r Desire to depart, and be with Christ,
which is far better. And why far better? But
because there he should be in the immediate Pre-
sence of Christ, behold him in all his Glories,
serve him without Weariness or Avocation, and
be perpetually delighted, blest, transported
with the Enjoyment of him. Now when
Christians die with these Hopes, and in full
View and Expectation of making this Improve-
ment by Dying, they may properly be said to
die to the LORD.

THEY may have an Eye indeed to their
own Happiness. So had our Saviour. ^r For
the Joy set before Him, he endured the Cross,
and despised the Shame. But then the Happi-
ness expected after Life, is what must flow from
the Perfection of our Holiness, and Obedience
to the Will of GOD. And when Heaven is
desireable to us under this Consideration, nay,
the principal Object of our Desires, and we
are willing to die because we have such a Pro-
spect open, and hope at Death to enter into the
Presence of our LORD, and please him per-
fectly for ever, and be for ever happy in his
Love and Service, may we not be truly said to
die to the LORD? It is dying to his Ho-
nour. It is dying to enter upon that State,
where we shall honour him perfectly for ever,
and this as a Matter of Choice and Preference.

^r Phil. i. 23.

^r Heb. xii. 2.

SERM. III. This very Expectation carries us above the natural Dread of Death. And is not this *dying to the LORD*? And now I proceed,

III. *Thirdly*, To consider the mutual Connexion between *living to the LORD*, and *dying to the LORD*, and their Dependance on each other. Or in other Words, how necessary it is we should *live to the LORD*, if we would *die to the LORD*: If we would hold Life at his Pleasure, or lay it down for his Sake, or die with a Desire and Expectation to be with him for ever. Such a Course of Life, is necessary to fit us, for such a Death. It is so,

I. *First*, IN the Ordinary Methods of divine Administration, according to the Account given of it in the Gospel. According to all the ordinary and common Methods of the Kingdom of Grace, such a Life is necessary to fit us for such a Death. It is by ^t *patient Continuance in well-doing, that we must seek for Glory, Honour and Immortality*, if we would obtain *eternal Life*. We must ^u *live soberly, righteously, and godly in this World*, if we would look for *the blessed Hope*. We must ^x *have our Fruit unto Holiness*, if we would have *our End everlasting Life*. We must ^y *keep our selves in the Love of GOD*, if we would look for *his Mercy to eternal Life*. And our ^z *Life must be Christ*, devoted to his Honour, spent in his Work and Service, if we would have *our Death be Gain*. We must ^a *live by Faith*, if we would ^b *die in Faith*. All these Expressions signify a Series of

^t Rom. ii. 7.

^u Tit. ii. 12.

^x Rom. vi. 22.

^y Jude 21.

^z Phil. i. 21.

^a Heb. x. 38.

^b Chap. xi. 13.

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Actions, a Course of Life, and a religious Conversation for a Continuance. SERM. III.

I do not indeed take upon me to say, how much of every one's Life must be spent in this Manner to fit him for Death; or entitle him to the Favour of GOD, that he may die safely. Nor do I pretend to *limit the holy One*, and pronounce peremptorily, that none are converted from Sin, or made alive to GOD, in the last Moments of Life. But I may say, with great Assurance, that such Instances are very rare. And it is very good Evidence that *Death-bed* Promises are commonly vain and ineffectual, because few *Sick-bed* Promises are made good by such as recover. The Promises of the Gospel, are generally to those that lead an holy and religious Life, not to them who enter upon such a Course at the Close of a Life spent in the Service of Sin, and open Hostility against GOD. It is little Comfort can be administered to such as make so desperate a Delay of their great Work; but it is hardly possible that they should die for the LORD's sake, or die with chearful Hopes of being for ever with him. Which brings me to observe,

II. *Secondly*, THAT, in the *Nature of the Thing* it is necessary we should *live to the LORD*, that we may also *die to the LORD*. For how should we hold Life at his Pleasure, how should we ever lay down our Lives for his sake, how should we ever die to be with him, that is to say, make this the matter of our Desire and Choice, without some previous Acquaintance with him, without some strong, though humble Confidence in him, or without a Spirit and Temper that, to a prevailing degree, is Heavenly and Divine? And we can never grow in-

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to such Acquaintance with GOD, or such Confidence in him, nor have a Temper fitted to the Work of Heaven, without living to GOD, without becoming devoted to him, and being inured to such Exercises as I have been describing: At least we cannot according to the Course of Nature, and the common Methods of the Kingdom of Grace.

INDEED, if upon Evangelical Principles we revive, and *become alive to GOD*; if we yield our selves to our Redeemer, and by his Mediation yield our selves to GOD; if we live to his Glory, and make this the grand Scope and Pursuit of our Lives and Actions; if we live entirely at his Disposal, in all the Affairs and Concerns of this Life; if we live subject to his Command, and diligently and chearfully serve him; if we live in constant Warfare and Conflict with his and our spiritual Enemies; and live by the Faith of Things invisible, and the Hopes of the incorruptible heavenly Inheritance; we may hold Life at the good Pleasure of GOD, and be content he should act as Lord of it; we may then, by the help of his Grace and Spirit, give up our Lives for his sake, when we are called to it, and may die to be with him. Such a Course of Life will naturally fit us for such a kind of Death. They match well together. *One* is a very proper and natural Introduction or Preface to the *other*.

BUT a Life spent in Enmity to GOD, and Opposition to his Authority, or in Neglect of GOD, and Estrangement from him, can never Issue in such a Death, without a Miracle of

Divine Power and Grace. GOD must not only step out of the common Course for this, but quite invert the Order of Nature. This he may do when he pleases, and perhaps sometimes has done, but whenever it is done, it is little less than a Miracle.

AND must not the Sinner be very presumptuous, who will go on in his Sins, upon the fond Hope that in his last Moments GOD will work a Miracle, that he may die to the LORD, and be happy with him for ever, who all his Life-long has bid him Defiance, and *cast his Fear behind his Back*, and would continue to do so, in all Appearance, if he were to have his Life prolonged? Let none of us delude ourselves with such false and fatal Expectations: But as we would *die to the LORD*, let us *live to him*. And now I proceed in the

IV. *Fourth and last Place*, To apply all with special Regard to the Season. We are now entering on a new Year, and who of us is sure he shall out-live it, or live indeed to the return of another Day? What can be more proper, at such a Season, than to put a few serious Questions to our selves? Many would naturally offer from this Subject, I shall content my self with a few; as

I. *First*, *How have I lived for the time past of Life?* “ Have I lived to my self, or to my
“ Saviour, to the World or to GOD? To
“ whom have I yielded up my self, my men-
“ tal Powers, my bodily Members, my Time,
“ my Strength, my Thoughts and best Affec-
“ tions? To the World or to GOD? Who
“ hath had the greatest Interest in me, and
“ Command over me? According to whose
“ *Will* have I lived? To the Will of GOD,

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“ or the Will of the Flesh, mine own corrupt
 “ Will and carnal Inclination? By what *Prin-*
 “ *ciple* have I lived, by Faith or by Sense? By
 “ what *Hopes* and *Prospects* have I been most
 “ influenced, those of this present, or those
 “ of another World? Which have I most
 “ cordially loved, most earnestly pursued, and
 “ been most intent upon, a real and solid Feli-
 “ city in the Favour and Enjoyment of GOD,
 “ or a mere Dream of Happiness in the Pos-
 “ session and Fruition of earthly Things? Have
 “ I been hitherto *sowing to the Flesh, or to the*
 “ *Spirit*? Have I been *minding earthly or hea-*
 “ *venly Things*? Which do I now most mind,
 “ and which are mine Heart and Affections
 “ most set upon? What hath been the Tenor
 “ and Course of my whole former Life? Have
 “ I been thorowly convinc’d that I am the
 “ LORD’s, that I belong to him, and have I
 “ hereupon yielded my self up heartily to his
 “ Pleasure and Command? Or have I lived hi-
 “ therto as if I were Lord of my self, and
 “ under the Controul and Command of no Su-
 “ perior? Or if I have had some slight Con-
 “ victions that I am the LORD’s, and some
 “ slight Purposes of yielding my self up, and
 “ living to him, have not these been powerless
 “ and ineffectual, and never heartily executed
 “ to this Moment? Pursue this Enquiry to
 some Issue.

II. *Secondly*, “ How have I spent the Year
 “ *past*? So much of my short Life is gone,
 “ and I am got so much nearer the Grave,
 “ the Tribunal of GOD, and a vast Eternity.
 “ But have I made any Progress in my great
 “ Work, in the proper and important Busi-
 “ ness of Life? How did I begin the Year
 “ *past*?

" past? In a State of Enmity against GOD, SERM. III.
 " or of Reconciliation to Him, and Friend-
 " ship with him? If in the *former State*, have
 " I this Year *passed from Death to Life*? Is
 " there a saving Change made in the Frame
 " and Disposition of my Mind? Hath mine
 " Heart been taken off the World, and set
 " upon GOD, and Christ, and heavenly Things?
 " From being at the Command of my Lusts
 " and sinful Inclinations, am I now at the
 " Command of my GOD? Do I reckon the
 " former a State of the most vile and hateful
 " Slavery, and this a State of the most noble
 " Freedom? And is the Change in my Opi-
 " nion and Temper made to appear, by a
 " Change of my Measures, and my Course of
 " Life? As I lived before to my self, to the
 " World, to the Flesh, do I now live to
 " GOD? Is his Glory my End, and his Word
 " my Rule, and his Service my most delight-
 " ful Work, and Himself the dear Object in
 " which my Soul would center and be at rest
 " for ever? In a Word, are *all old Things done*
 " *away*, and *is every Thing become new*? Have
 " I new Thoughts, and new Purposes, and
 " new Affections, and a new Heart, and do I
 " walk with GOD in *Newness of Life*? Or
 " am I in the same Condition still, and under
 " the same vile Tyranny and Thralldom? Do
 " I not to this Day remain an *Enemy to GOD*
 " *by wicked Works*, and under his Curse and
 " the condemning Sentence of his righteous
 " Law, abhorred by Him for my Sins, and
 " exposed to his fierce Wrath and *fiery Indig-*
 " *nation*? Certain it is, that if I have not al-
 " tered my Course, nor changed my Road, I
 " have gone backward, I am become more a
 " *Child*

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“ *Child of Wrath* than I was the last Year,
 “ deeper in Arrear to divine Justice, under a
 “ greater Load of Guilt, and more confirmed
 “ in my wicked Bent and Inclinations.

OR if I entered on the past Year in a State
 of *Favour* and *Friendship* with GOD, “ have I
 “ gone forward and improved in this Friend-
 “ ship? Am I got so much nearer Heaven, as
 “ I am nearer Death and the Grave? Am I
 “ grown so much more *meet for the Inheri-*
 “ *tance of the Saints in Light?*” This will be
 the more easily resolved, by attending to the
 next Enquiry.

III. *Thirdly*, “ WHAT is my present Tem-
 “ per and Course? What is the present Dispo-
 “ sition of my Mind, and the Tenor of my
 “ Life and Conversation? Is the Life I live in
 “ the Flesh a Life of Faith? Is it a divine
 “ Life? Do I live to GOD? Can I call him
 “ my GOD? Have I accepted him in Christ,
 “ and owned and chosen him as such, and
 “ yielded my self up to him? Have I deliver-
 “ ed up into his own Hands what is his own
 “ Right, and thrown up all mine Usurpations,
 “ and renounced the Dominion of all other
 “ Lords? Do I heartily submit to his Autho-
 “ rity, and bow to his Command? Have I a
 “ liking to all his holy and righteous Laws, as
 “ they prescribe to my self, and are Rules
 “ for mine own Conduct and Behaviour? Is
 “ his Work my Business, his Service my De-
 “ light? Do I with Pleasure enquire out his
 “ Will, and with Readiness and Chearfulness
 “ comply with it, and conform to it when ’tis
 “ known, or at least make it mine hearty and
 “ sincere Endeavour? Is it my chief Concern
 “ to please him, and is his Displeasure what I
 “ would

“ would above all Things dread and avoid? Do
 “ I esteem his Enemies mine, my worst and
 “ most hated Enemies, and make it my Endeavour
 “ to resist and oppose them in all their
 “ Attempts against his Honour, and the Salvation
 “ of my precious and immortal Soul?
 “ Do I live by the Faith of Things unseen,
 “ upon the hope of the glorious *Recompence* of
 “ *the Reward* in a future Life? Is *my Treasure*
 “ *in Heaven*, and is this evident by my Heart’s
 “ being there? Are mine *Affections set on Things*
 “ *above*? Are they what I prefer before all the
 “ Enjoyments of the World? The Hopes of
 “ which I would not renounce for a thousand
 “ Worlds, but to secure them would part
 “ with the dearest Possessions of Life, nay
 “ and with Life it self? Do I live in the frequent
 “ Views of another World, and is it
 “ my daily Endeavour, by proper Means, to
 “ work up my Heart into a Meetness for it,
 “ by Meditation, by Prayer, by Thanksgiving,
 “ by consulting the Word of GOD, and diligent
 “ Attendance on all Evangelical Ordinances?
 “ And after all, do I own my self *an unprofitable*
 “ *Servant*, humble my self before
 “ GOD, under the Sense of my manifold Weaknesses
 “ and Sins, and cast my self wholly upon the
 “ Mercy of GOD, and hope for Acceptance or
 “ Reward for Christ’s sake only, through the Merit
 “ of his Obedience and Sufferings, and the Success
 “ and Prevalency of his Intercession?” If any of us
 “ can answer to these Enquiries in the affirmative,
 “ he may hope well concerning his Case, he may
 “ conclude it to be safe and comfortable, and will
 “ be helped to resolve the next.

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W IV. Fourthly, "IN what Readiness am I to
 " die to GOD? How willing and free am I
 " to hold Life at his Pleasure, and leave him
 " to act as Lord of it, and take it from me
 " when he sees meet? How ready am I, should
 " I be called to it, *to die for Him*? What Tri-
 " al of this kind I may have before another
 " Year is gone, I cannot foresee. Can I lay
 " down my Life for his sake, for his Truth,
 " his Interests, or his Honour, if it be requi-
 " red? If I cannot speak out with Confidence
 " that I can, from a just Distrust of my self,
 " yet can I say, that *through Christ strengthen-*
 " *ing me*, I hope I should be able? If I know
 " my Heart, I had rather suffer any thing, than
 " desert my Redeemer's Cause, or dishonour
 " his Name. In what Readiness am I to die,
 " and be with the LORD? To pass out of
 " this World into his Presence, his glorious
 " Presence, to be filled with all his Fullness,
 " feasted with his Love, and for ever devoted
 " to his Pleasure and Service, and employed in
 " it, and that with perpetual Satisfaction and
 " Delight? Is this a State which I indeed pre-
 " fer to every other? Are all Things in Or-
 " der for my Change? Do I know them to be
 " so? They may be in Order, and I ignorant
 " that they are so. But I can never die in
 " Peace, or otherwise than with Reluctance,
 " till I know that all Things are well between
 " GOD and me. Do I know this? Am I
 " persuaded in mine own Mind, upon good
 " Grounds, that GOD and I are reconciled?
 " If I cannot speak this as a Matter past all
 " Doubt, can I comfort myself that it is high-
 " ly probable? Can I say that my great Busi-
 " ness, what I have most at Heart, is to please
 " GOD,

“ GOD, be accepted of him in Christ, and SERM. III.
“ secure the Happiness of Heaven? It is not,
“ cannot be long before I must die, I know
“ not how soon I may die, and what is more
“ my Concern than to die well, to *die to the*
“ *LORD*, and to know in what Readiness I
“ am for a safe and a comfortable Change?

V. *Fifthly and lastly*, “ WHAT is my Purpose for the Time to come? How do I resolve
“ to live this Year I am now entering upon,
“ and the Remainder of my Life in this World?
“ And here,

I. *First*, “ If hitherto I have *lived without*
“ *GOD in the World*, or not lived to Him at
“ all? Is it my Purpose to proceed in this
“ Course? Can I own and avow such a wicked
“ Resolution as this? What doth it imply
“ less than downright Defiance of GOD, and
“ Contempt of Heaven, and mine own Soul?
“ Or if I am not open in such a Purpose, is it
“ not yet the secret Resolution of my Soul,
“ disguised and covered over with some faint
“ Wishes, and powerless Essays of another
“ kind? Or am I indeed fixed in my Purpose,
“ to quit my former sinful Courses, and turn
“ from them to GOD? Is this a Purpose formed
“ upon full Conviction of the Wrong I
“ have done to GOD, by *living without him in*
“ *the World*, and just Apprehensions of the
“ dreadful Vengeance due to me for Sin, with
“ a just Distrust of my self, and in full Dependence
“ on the Help and Influences of the
“ holy Spirit? Is it my Purpose in Christ’s
“ Name and Strength to leave all my Sins without
“ Exception, and to enter into the Christian
“ Covenant, and according to the Tenor
“ of the Gospel give my self up to GOD, and
“ that

SERM. III.

“ that fully and heartily, without Fraud or
 “ Reserve? To be governed by his Laws, em-
 “ ployed in his Work and Service, and to be
 “ at his Disposal for all Time to come, with
 “ utter Renunciation of every wicked Way
 “ and Thought, and of every Idol that hath
 “ heretofore seduced mine Heart from GOD?
 “ Is this my settled Purpose? A Purpose to be
 “ put in immediate Execution? Am I resolved,
 “ by GOD’s Help, not to delay this necessary
 “ Work a Moment longer? I know *not what*
 “ *a Day may bring forth.* One Day’s continu-
 “ ance in a sinful State may put me out of the
 “ reach of Mercy, and either harden me in
 “ Sin, and provoke GOD to let me alone, and
 “ leave me to my own evil Inclinations, or de-
 “ liver me over to eternal Destruction and
 “ Vengeance. Sure this is not a Circumstance in
 “ which I should be easy. Am I therefore come
 “ to a Point, and resolved this Day, this Mo-
 “ ment, to leave every *wicked Way and unright-*
 “ *eous Thought, and turn to the LORD with*
 “ *all mine Heart and Soul?*” But,

II. *Secondly*, UPON Supposition that I have
 heretofore been *reconciled to GOD in Christ*,
 and have made it my sincere Endeavour in some
 good Measure *to live to Him*, what are my Pur-
 poses for the future? “ For this Year which
 “ is now commenced, for the whole future
 “ Course of my Life; Whether it shall be
 “ drawn out to a greater length than this Year,
 “ or no? Is it my Purpose to continue devo-
 “ ted to GOD, to keep my self in his Love,
 “ and to persist and persevere to the End *in*
 “ *living to Him*, whatever Difficulties I may
 “ encounter, whatever Hazards I may run, or
 “ whatever Losses I may sustain for my Fide-
 “ lity

Living and dying to the LORD.

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SERM. III.

“ lity to Him, and Zeal for his Interests and
“ Honour? Am I fixed in my Resolution, ra-
“ ther by his Grace to die for him, than de-
“ sert his Cause, or disown his Truth, or wil-
“ fully disobey any one of his holy and righte-
“ ous Laws? Am I resolved, if I outlive this
“ Year, to spend it in the faithful Service of
“ my GOD and Saviour, and in diligent Pre-
“ paration for Death, Judgment and Eternity?
“ Is it my Purpose thus to spend the Remain-
“ der of my Days, be it longer or shorter than
“ the Year now before me? And to live and
“ act as one should, who certainly expects to
“ die, and looks for the second coming of
“ Christ in the Clouds of Heaven, and to be
“ adjudged by him, either to eternal Happi-
“ ness or eternal Woe, *according to the Deeds*
“ *done* in the Body, whether good or evil?

“ Is it my purpose to awaken out of my
“ Slumbers, to shake off all Drowziness and
“ Sloth, all Slackness and Indifferency in the
“ Affairs of my Soul, and exert my self with
“ greater Vigour, and Earnestness, and Zeal in
“ my great Work, than ever I have done?
“ That I may get over all my Doubts, that I
“ may get rid of all my Fears, may look up to
“ Christ as my Redeemer, and to GOD through
“ him as my reconciled GOD, and to Heaven
“ as my chosen Home, the happy Region
“ where I shall make my Abode for ever: That
“ I may look forward to the Judgment Day,
“ with humble, but well-grounded Confidence,
“ of a full Discharge from all my Guilt, and
“ by this means may also look the last Enemy
“ in the Face without Dismay, and in my last
“ Moments, *when Flesh and Heart shall fail,*
“ may conquer Death, and triumph over it?

SERM. III.

“ Alas ! have I not Reason to mend my Pace,
 “ and to be more quick in my Motions, when
 “ so much of a short and dubious Life hath
 “ run to waste, and my Attainments in Reli-
 “ gion are so vastly short of what they ought
 “ to be, and might have been ?

“ A W A K E, oh my drowzy Soul. Shake
 “ off all Sloth. Rouze all thy Powers. Make
 “ better Improvement of thine Opportunities,
 “ and more diligent Dispatch of thy great Bu-
 “ siness. The Continuance of Life is very un-
 “ certain. It will be past, *as a Tale that is*
 “ *told.* Oh let me enter on this new Revo-
 “ lution of Time, with more fixed Purposes
 “ for G O D, and more intent *to work out my*
 “ *Salvation with Fear and Trembling, and make*
 “ *my Calling and Election sure.* That, if I out-
 “ live this Year, I may *live more to the LORD*
 “ than I have done in Time past, and grow ri-
 “ per and more meet for Heaven. And, if I
 “ am this Year called out of the World, I
 “ may *die to the LORD* : Die to be happy,
 “ and blest with him for ever : And may know
 “ that this is my Condition and Case, that I
 “ may die resigned to the Will of my heaven-
 “ ly Father : May commit my Body to his
 “ Care with chearful Trust, and commend my
 “ departing Spirit into the merciful Hands of
 “ my Redeemer : May leave this World with
 “ a Smile, whilst the dawning of eternal Day
 “ breaks in upon my Mind, and the blissful
 “ Hopes of perfect and immortal Life, to com-
 “ mence as soon as ever the Knot of Union is
 “ untied, shall lift up my Heart, and carry me
 “ chearful through the Gloom that lies be-
 “ tween the two Worlds, and my glad Soul
 “ shall sing her *Nunc dimittis, Now lettest thou*
 “ *thy*

“thy Servant depart in Peace, for mine Eyes SERM. III.
“have seen thy Salvation. Who that hath a
“ny Relish of the Satisfaction of dying in
“this manner, can be negligent or remiss in
“his great Business? Let me feel before-hand
“the powerful Pleasure, oh my Soul, of dy-
“ing thus in the LORD, that I may be ex-
“cited to dispatch my great Work, and wish
“for my Change, that I may taste it when I
“come to die. Let me live to the LORD
“as much as possible, that I may die to the
“LORD in the highest and most relishing
“Sense, in the transporting Thoughts and
“Hopes of living to him, and with him for
“ever.” *Amen. Hallelujah.*



H

CHRIST's



CHRIST's Incarnation.

A

S E R M O N

Preached in the OLD JEWRY,
December 25, 1718.



JOHN i. ver. 14. former part.
And the Word was made Flesh.

SERM. IV.



HIS Day is commonly termed the Day of our Saviour's Nativity. Indeed, it is far from being certain, that He was born at *this Season* of the Year, much less on this very Day. However, the Time of his Birth being the

^a Lydiat supposes our Saviour was born in the Spring. And Nisbet, a learned Scotsman, would fix it to the Day and Hour of slaying the Passover. The Cyprianic Computum Paschale, published by Bishop Fell, fixes the Day of his Birth to the vth of the Calends of April, on the ivth Day of the Week, answering to March xxviii, in our

way of reckoning, p. 69. Clemens Alexandrinus tells us, many who had taken care to enquire into this Matter, say our Saviour was born the xxvth of the Egyptian Month Pachon, answering to May xx. in our Calendar. Strom. l. i. p. 340. Edit. Paris, 1629.

On the other hand, Scaliger, Calvisius, and our learned Country-

the Time of his Manifestation in Flesh, or *his* SERM. IV.
Incarnation; and this being one of the great
 Mysteries of the Gospel, it cannot be impro-
 per at such a Season to call your Thoughts hi-
 ther, to explain such a Point, and see to what
 practical Purposes the Doctrine will serve. For
 this End I have read the Words of my Text.
The Word was made Flesh. Or *that Word,*
 ὁ Λόγος, which he had before mentioned and
 described; by which we are referred back to
 the Account given of him in the beginning of
 the Chapter. This Word is here said *to be made*
Flesh. My Business shall be

- I. *First*, To consider WHO is here said
to be made Flesh?
- II. *Secondly*, WHAT is implied in his being
made Flesh?
- III. *Thirdly*, To improve the Doctrine. Of
 each of these in their Order. And

I. *First*, WHO is HE that is here said *to be*
made Flesh? The WORD. That Word of
 which he had before given the Character and
 Description. Concerning whom, I have only
 two Things to observe. (1. *First*), That the E-
 vangelist asserts him to be GOD. (2. *Secondly*),
 That He as manifestly distinguishes him from
 another, who is also GOD, viz. the Father.

I. *First*, HE asserts him to be GOD, and

Countryman Lightfoot, suppose
 him to have been born in Au-
 tumn: And this last would fix
 the Time of his Birth to the
 Month Tisri, answering to part
 of our September, and to the
 very Day of the Feast of Ta-

bernacles, which is far from
 being an improbable Opinion.
 Vid. Basnag. Annal. ad Ann.
 ante Dom. 5. p. 118. Light-
 foot, Harm. and Exercit. in
 Luc. ii. 8.

SERM. IV. that in the proper Sense of the Word. He not only gives Him the Name, *The Word was GOD*, but he also attributes Eternity to Him; and ascribes to Him the Creation of all Things. *In the Beginning was the Word, &c. 1.* For the Meaning of which Expression, we are properly referred to the first Verse of the Book of *Genesis*; where GOD is said, *in the Beginning to have Created the Heavens and the Earth.* And what was already in Being, when Heaven and Earth, *i.e.* the Universe of made Beings, began to Exist, must properly be Eternal. The Phrase seems to be an *Hebraism* signifying Eternity. And hence is it said of Wisdom, which by the Ancients is commonly interpreted of the Word here mentioned, *The LORD possessed me in the Beginning of his Ways, before his Works of old.* And in the next Verse, *from Everlasting, from the Beginning, e're ever the Earth was,* seem to be synonymous Expressions, explaining each other. If the Word therefore was *in the Beginning*, He was *from Everlasting*. Proper Eternity is therefore here attributed to Him.

AND this will receive farther Evidence, from this Consideration, that *the Creation of all Things* is here ascribed to him. *c All Things were made by him; and without him was not any Thing made, that was made. No one Thing, &c. &c. &c.* Now, if not so much as one Thing was made *without* him, it is plain that every particular Thing was made *by him*; and thus much is implied in *all Things being made by him.* So that he is indeed asserted here to be the Creator of all Creatures. For that the Passage is to be understood of the

^b Prov. viii. 22, 23.

^c Ver. 3.

Formation of all created Being, is manifest from SERM. IV. hence, that it is afterward said, *the^d World was made by him.* Now, He who was the Maker of every Thing that was made, no one such thing excepted, must himself be unmade, must have been in Being before they were made, *i. e.* before Time began, and so must have been Eternal. And He who was from Eternity, and made all Things, is every where in Scripture declared to be GOD. *^e Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the Earth, and the World; even from Everlasting to Everlasting, thou art GOD. ^f Of old hast thou laid the Foundations of the Earth; and the Heavens are the Work of thy Hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure. Thou art the same, and thy Years have no end.*

II. Secondly, THE Word is yet plainly distinguished from another, who is GOD also, *viz. the Father.* It is said of him, that he was *g with GOD, and that he was GOD.* Nay, that it may be the more regarded, it is doubled over; *^h The same was in the Beginning with GOD.* GOD, with whom he was, is, I think, on all hands, agreed to be the Father; tho' not so as to exclude the Holy Spirit: And yet he is plainly distinguished from the Father. He is not in all Respects the same, the self-same as He, with whom he is said to have been: Such a Supposition would make the *Evangelist's* Talk exceeding trifling. Why should he twice assert, that He was with GOD, if all meant by it is, that he was with himself? Which would be

^d Ver. 10. ^e Psal. xc. 2. ^h Ver. 2.
^f Psal. ciii. 25, 26, 27. ^g Ver. 1.

SERM. IV. the Case, if the Word and He with whom he is said to have been, were, in all Respects, without Difference or Distinction, the self-same. The Meaning of the Passage is plainly this: In the Beginning was the Word, ὁ Λόγος, and this Word was with GOD, viz. the Father (as all agree) and this Word who was with the Father; and therefore was not the Father, but another distinct from him, was GOD as well as He.

It is indeed pretended by some, that there is a Variation of the Phrase. The *Logos* is only said to be GOD, or a GOD. Θεός without the Article, not ὁ Θεός, The GOD, as he is termed with whom he is said to have been. But this I take to be a frivolous Exception. Indeed, had Scripture-Language always distinguished the true GOD, by the Article, from others called GODS, and being such in a *lower* and *borrowed* Sense, there would be some Shew of Reason for the Remark. But all, who are acquainted with the Scripture-Style and Language, know that there is no such Distinction used. Θεός both *with* the Article, and *without* it, certainly stands for the living GOD, the true GOD. And if, when they tell us, that the *Logos* is here called GOD, but not in the *same Sense* as He is, with whom he is said to have been, if they mean, that he is not *true* GOD, they are manifestly confuted by the Context, as I have shewn under the former Head. Besides, had the Article been added to Θεός, in the last Clause, it had quite changed the *Evangelist's* Meaning; for ὁ Θεός ἢ ὁ Λόγος, wou'd have signified, *and that God*, with whom he is in the former Clause said to have been, *was the, or that Word*; which would be directly contradictory

dictory to the former Assertion, in which he SERM. IV. distinguishes him from *the Word*, by saying that  the Word was with him.

So that a Distinction is here manifestly made between GOD and GOD, GOD and the Word, who is yet said to be GOD. It is not He with whom the Word was, that was made Flesh, but *the Word was made Flesh*. GOD was indeed ⁱ *manifested in the Flesh*, but it was *in the Person* (as commonly it is called) of the Son. The Word was Incarnate, but not the Father. The *Incarnation of the Father*, was the Error, or *Heresy* (if you please to call it so after the Fathers, who were very liberal in giving out hard and hateful Names) of the *Patripassians*, whose Opinion is thus briefly laid down by *Victorinus*. They say, ^k *He only is GOD, whom we call the Father : That He is single, and by himself ; and he alone made all Things. And he not only came into the World, but took Flesh, and did all those Things which we attribute to the Son.*

BUT though there be such Distinction between the Father and the Son, and yet both are GOD, this must be so understood, as to maintain the Unity of the Godhead. They are so distinct as to be one and another, but not so distinct or divided, as to be one GOD and another. GOD is but One, and yet there are more than One who are GOD. But if it be asked how this can be? I can only say, when GOD shall be pleased to discover it, we may be better able to answer this Question, than

ⁱ 1 Tim. iii. 16. ^k Deum Solum esse dicunt quem nos Patrem dicimus. Ipsum solum existentem & effectricem omnium : Et non solum venisse in Mundum ; sed & in Carnem, & alia omnia fecisse que nos Filium fecisse dicimus.

SERM. IV. now we can. That it is so in Fact, is manifest from what has been said, and the whole Scope and Strain of Scripture. If Divine Wisdom had thought it needful we should have known more of the Matter, more had been discovered. In the mean time, 'tis good not to be wise *above what is written.* This is plain from the Context, concerning the Word, that he is GOD, and that he is not GOD the Father, but distinct from him, not the *self-same* in all Respects, but in some Respects *Another*; though not *another GOD.* And this brings me to enquire,

II. Secondly, WHAT is implied in his *being made Flesh.* Now to understand this, let it be observed, that the Word *Flesh* hath, in Holy Scripture, various Significations. Sometimes it is taken for Man made up of Soul and Body. Thus ¹ *All Flesh had corrupted its way,* means all Mankind had done it. So, ^m *Oh thou that hearest Prayers, to Thee shall all Flesh come,* i. e. all Mankind, some of all Nations and People. So again, ⁿ *All Flesh shall know that I am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the mighty GOD of Jacob;* that is, All Men shall know. Yet in the very same Verse, must it be understood of the Body, as contra-distinguished from the Soul, where it is said, *I will feed them which oppress thee, with their own Flesh;* as also in that Passage, ^o *The Flesh of thy Saints have they given to the Beasts of the Earth.* And again, ^p *We have had Fathers of our Flesh;* where it stands directly opposed to our Spirits, who are there

¹ Gen. vi. 12. ^m Psal. lxxv. 2. ^p Heb. xii. 9.
^o Isai. xlix. 26. ^o Psal. lxxix. 2.

asserted to have a different Father, own GOD SERM. IV.
 alone for their immediate Author, and the Cause of their Being; upon which Account he is there called the *Father of Spirits*. Sometimes it is used to signify the Frailty of our present State. Thus it is said, ⁹ *He remembred they were but Flesh; a Wind that passeth away and cometh.* Which is explained by another Passage; where it is said, ^r *He remembreth our Frame; he considers we are but Dust. As for Man, his Days are as Grass: The Wind passeth over it, and it is gone.* To the same Purpose it is said, ^f *All Flesh is Grass, and all the Goodliness thereof, as the Flower of the Field. The Grass withereth, the Flower fadeth; because the Spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: Surely the People is Grass.* There are other Senses of the Word, especially in the *New Testament*, which can have no Place here; as when the *Flesh* is put for the Carnal and corrupt *Inclination*, that is in the Heart and Nature of fallen Man. This being observed, I will now endeavour to lay the Sense of the Passage plainly before you, in the following Particulars: *The Words being made Flesh*, implies

I. *First*, THAT *He took to himself the Body and Flesh of a Man*, a true Body, and not the mere *Phantasm* or *Appearance* of such a Body. This was the wild Conceit of some of the ancient *Heretics*, therefore called *Docetæ* and *Phantasiastæ*. They said he was not truly born, nor did really suffer and die, but only *putative* and in *Phantasmate*, in *Opinion* or *Appearance* only.

⁹ Psal. lxxviii. 39. ^r Psal. ciii. 14, 15, 16. ^f Isai. xl, 6, 7.

Indeed,

SERM. IV. Indeed, He is said to ^c*be made in Fashion like a Man*, to be made *in the Likeness of Man*. But it is a very strange Meaning put upon those Words, to make them say he was *only* made Man in Appearance, that he did only bear the Resemblance of a Man, *without being One*. He is expressly said to have ^a*partook of Flesh and Blood*. ^{*}*He had a Body prepared for Him*. And this made up of Flesh and Blood, that ^y*He might in his own Body bear our Sins on the Cross*, and that by shedding ^z*his own Blood*, he might procure for us *Remission of our Sins*. He was really conceived in the Womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, and nursed by her, and so was made ^a*of the Seed of David according to the Flesh*. He suffered Hunger and Thirst, did eat and drink, and was nourished by Eating and Drinking. He was seized, arraigned, judged, condemned, and executed. He was nailed to the Cross, had his Hands and Feet bored with Nails; his Side and Heart opened with a Spear, and thereupon poured out his Blood. He died on the Cross, and then was taken down from it, was buried, rose again in the same Body, appeared in it to his Disciples, and gave them clear and convincing Proof, that it was not an ^b*airy Phantom*, which they saw; not a mere Apparition, and much less a disembodied Spirit. He called on his Disciples to touch and handle Him, and judge, by their very Senses, whether he was not truly Flesh and Blood. Nay, he indulged so far to the Diffidence and Distrust of Thomas, as to suffer him

^a Phil. ii. 6, 7.

^{*} Heb. ii. 14. ^z Chap. x. 5. | ^y 1 Pet. ii. 24. ^a Heb. ix. 12.

^a Rom. i. 3. ^b Luk. xxiv. 37, 39.

to put his Fingers into the Prints of the Nails, SERM. IV. and thrust his Hand into his Side; and after he had used this Condescension, tells him he should not *be Faithless, but believe.*

So that to all, who credit the Scripture-History, it must be out of Doubt, that the Word, when he was made Flesh, did assume the true and proper Body of a Man, and so was *made like his Brethren*, Flesh and Blood as we are. Again,

II. *Secondly*, His *being made Flesh*, implies, that he *assumed human Nature*. He took to Him not only the Body or Flesh of Man, but the rational Soul also united to it. It was the Opinion of *Apollinaris*, Bishop of *Laodicea*, in the IVth Century, a Man of prodigious Learning, and of singular Esteem for his Piety, at least till he fell into this Mistake, that Man is made up of three Parts, *Body, Soul and Spirit*, (a Notion borrowed from the *Platonists*.) And that the *Logos*, or Word assumed the Body and Soul of a Man only, but not his Mind, the *Sensitive Powers*, which were imagined to reside in an Inferior Soul, and not the *Intellectual Powers*, which had their proper Residence, according to these Men, in the *Næs* or Mind, properly so called; the Place of which, *Apollinaris* and his Disciples thought, the *Logos*, or Word supplied. It was also the Sentiment of many of the *Arians*, that the Word was instead of an Human Soul to the Man *Christ Jesus*. And some in our Times, who seem to have improved upon their Scheme, tell us that He was made Man, in the proper Sense of the

SERM. IV. Words, an human Body being prepared for him, and himself diminished into an human Mind; and will have this to be the meaning of his ^d*emptying himself, and taking upon him the Form of a Servant, and being made in the Likeness of Men.*

AND admitting him to be only a Creature, produced in Time, and *out of Nothing*, by the mere Pleasure and Will of the Father, this is a possible Supposition. But, to reconcile what is said of him, in this very Passage, with his being a Creature, and especially to reconcile this with the rest of the Holy Scriptures, is, I think, impossible. That he is true GOD, is manifest, I think, from what has been said already from this Context, and therefore it is impossible he should become a Human Soul. Such a Change GOD cannot undergo. And there is no need to produce express Texts of Scripture to make out this Negative, that the Creator of all Things, the eternal GOD, did not dwindle into an Human Soul.

IF therefore there be any Evidence that the *Man Christ Jesus* had the Understanding and Affections of Human Nature, it must be by Virtue of an Human Soul or Mind, united to his Body.

AND that He had such Understanding and Affections, is manifest to all who consult the Sacred Writings. He had a *Mind* capable of Intellectual Operations and Improvements, and of increasing ^e*in Wisdom and Knowledge*, as well as a Body capable of growing in Bulk and Stature. A Soul that had the Affections of

^d Phil. ii. 7. ^e Luk. ii. 52.

^f Hope,

^f Hope, and Joy, and ^g Grief, and ^h Anger. SERM. IV.
 He had a Power to deliberate, and upon Deliberation to determine, and chuse or refuse as he saw convenient. This is manifest, from the Request he made to his Father, during his Agony in the Garden. ⁱ *If thou art willing, let this Cup pass from me; yet not as I will, but as thou wilt.* And from that other Prayer to the same Purpose. ^k *Father, save me from this Hour: But for this Cause came I to this Hour. Father, glorify thy self.* Expressions that manifestly imply Deliberation, Debate with himself, and Determination made thereupon. In short, he was in all Things made ^l like to us, Sin only excepted.

So that it is now evident, that the *Logos*, or Word assumed the Human Nature complete, and not merely the *Flesh of a Man*, to be animated, acted, guided, and governed by the *Indwelling Divinity*. Again,

III. *Thirdly*, It is not out of the way to observe, That when the Word is said *to be made Flesh*, it is intimated, that He freely subjected Himself to all the *sinless Infirmities of our present frail and mortal State*. He not only assumed Human Nature, but became liable to all the Innocent Frailties of it. ^m *He was in all Things tempted like as we are, though without Sin.* He was never conquered by a Temptation, but he was assaulted with the most violent ones. He was exercised with all manner of Afflictions and Tryals, incident to Human

^f Heb. v. 7. Heb. xii. 2. | 27, 28. ^l Heb. ii. 17. comp.
^g Mat. xxvi. 38. ^h John ii. 17. | Chap. vii. 26. ^m Heb. iv. 15.
ⁱ Luk. xxii. 42. ^k John xii. |

SERM. IV. Nature : To Poverty, Contempt, Indignity, and ill Usage, of the worst Sort : To Hunger, Thirst, Sickness and Pain : To the Treachery of Disciples and Friends, and the outrageous Malice of Enemies; who pursued him to the Death, and could be satisfied with nothing less than his Blood. Nor would any common Method of Slaughter satisfy them neither; He must be crucified, he must die as a Malefactor, as the most criminal Malefactor, and be barbarously insulted and abused in his expiring Agonies. He was indeed, according to the Character given by the Prophet, *"A Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief; despised, and rejected of Men.* He lived, for a great part of his Life, *obscurely*; when he made his more public Appearance, he lived *mean and despised*, and he died ignominiously. And yet, with all this in full View, did the Word assume our Nature. Again,

IV. *Fourthly*, THOUGH he was made Flesh, yet the *Human and Divine Natures, still continued distinct in Him, and will do so for ever.* He was GOD before He took to Him the Human Nature; and he continues to be GOD since this Assumption. Upon his Incarnation he became Man, and so He remains, and will remain for ever, without *Transmutation or Confusion* of the two Natures, without changing One into the Other, or mingling them together; either of these Things being utterly impossible.

THERE can be no changing One into the Other. Not of *Man into GOD.* How can

that which began to be To-day, or Seventeen SERM. IV.
 hundred Years ago, be changed into what never had Beginning, but was from all Eternity? How can what is limited and absolutely dependent, be changed into what is boundless and independent? How can the Flesh of the *Man Christ Jesus*, be transubstantiated into Spirit, and such a Spirit as GOD must have always been? Besides, at what Time should this be? At the Time of the Incarnation it could not. This were plainly to contradict the Text. There it is said *the Word was made Flesh*; whereas, upon this Supposition, it should have been said, *Flesh was made, or changed into the Word*. Unless in flat Contradiction to all the Reason in the World, we can suppose the Word to be *made Flesh*, by changing Flesh into somewhat that is not Flesh, but Spirit. So that such *Transmutation* of the Human Nature, or Flesh of Christ, into his Divine Nature, is in the Reason of Things, a manifest Impossibility, and utterly to be disowned by Christians.

NOR could the *Divine Nature* of our Saviour be *changed into his Human*, by his *being made Flesh*. This were, if possible, a more monstrous Absurdity than the forementioned one, and much more derogating from the Majesty and Perfections of GOD. If it were so great a Sin in *Heathens*, to worship GOD under bodily Images and Representations, that they are charged deeply hereupon by GOD himself, *° with changing the Glory of the incorruptible GOD into an Image made like to corruptible Man; nay, changing the Truth of GOD into a Lye*, how much

SERM. IV. more criminal is it to change him into a real Man? For this is not barely to sink his Character, and fully his Glory by debasing Symbols of his Presence and Godhead, or sensible Representations of a pure and perfect Spirit; but it is debasing his very Nature, by changing it into that of a poor, frail, limited, and indeed, puny and contemptible Being. And how is it possible, that the Eternal GOD, who exists necessarily, and never had, nor could have Beginning, should become a Being, who once was not at all, and when he began to Be, was made merely by his Will and Power? He must, on this Supposition, *have been in Being* before this other Being, into which he is supposed to be changed, was made; because he made it; and yet he must *not have been in Being* before it; because he is supposed to be changed into what before had no Being. In other Words, He must have ceased to exist from Eternity, that he might then begin to exist. And yet he must have been from Eternity, or he could never had a Beginning neither; the Man into which he was changed being to be made by his own Power. And what should have produced such a Change? No foreign Power, nothing *without GOD* could do it, because nothing without him has a Power equal to his, much less superior. Nor could GOD himself make this Change in himself, because it is in Nature impossible, that what *was from Eternity*, and was necessarily from Eternity, should lose its eternal and necessary Existence, and become a Production of mere Will and Pleasure, and begin to be.

NOR could there have been *any Confusion* of his two Natures, or *Mixture of them into One*. For had it been possible to compound the two

Natures

Natures into one, that one compounded Nature had been a different Thing from what both were before, and would neither be an human nor the Divine Nature, but a Nature of a different Kind, made out of both, as all compound Beings are. Upon which Supposition he would be neither GOD nor Man, but somewhat different from both. It would also be a great Debasement of the Divine Nature to be mingled in this manner with any created Nature whatsoever. GOD and the Creature stand at such infinite Distance, that such a Mixture must be impossible. *Flesh* and *Spirit*, mortal and corruptible *Flesh*, and the immortal *Father of Spirits*, can never be thus confounded and blended together.

So that after the eternal *Word* was made *Flesh*, the two Natures must still be supposed to continue distinct one from the other. They could neither be transmuted into one another, nor be confounded and mixed one with the other. But

V. *Fifthly*, HIS being made *Flesh*, implies, That He took the human Nature into personal Union, with his own Divine Nature. So that, from the Incarnation, *Immanuel* became one Person. The human and Divine Nature of Christ, remain distinct, as I have shewn under the former Head; but the Word assuming the human Nature to himself, becomes the Person *Jesus Christ*. And thus the Holy Scriptures every where speak of him, as one single Person still; and attribute many Things to him as a Person, which are incompatible with either of his Natures singly considered. He who was in the Beginning with GOD, which is only true of him in his Divine Nature, was yet

SERM. IV. P

made of a Woman made under the Law, which can be strictly said only of his human Nature. He ^q whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting, was yet born at Bethlehem, in the Days of Herod. He who ^r according to the Flesh was of the Seed of David, was yet ^s over all, GOD blessed for evermore. He ^t by whom GOD made the Worlds, and who upholds all Things by the Word of his Power, yet ^u tasted Death for every Man. He ^v who was in the Form of GOD, yet took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was exalted of GOD. He ^y who died on the Cross, yet raised him from the Dead, who was put to Death in this manner.

ALL these Passages of holy Scripture (and many more might be produced to the same Purpose) speak of Christ, the *Word made Flesh*, as One Person. And attribute these several Actions to him, though very disparate in themselves, under this Notion and Character. Which certainly implies a personal Union of the two Natures, or in other Words, though his Natures continue distinct, as they were before his assuming Flesh, yet after this Assumption, he is but one Person, and no more still. For

If the human and Divine Natures of Christ, were two Persons as well as two Natures, these Expressions of holy Scripture could not be true. For if the Divine Nature of Christ were one Person, and his human Nature another Person,

^p Gal. iv. 4.^q Mic. v. 2.^r Rom. i. 3.^s Rom. ix. 5.^t Heb. i. 2, 3.^u Heb. ii. 9.^v Phil. ii. 7, 9.^y John ii. 19.

it is plain that the Actions proper to either, must be ascribed to that Person, and to *that only*, to which they belong. And upon this Supposition, he who died on the Cross, could not ² be GOD *over all blessed for ever*, it being only the Man Christ who died, and who was, upon this Supposition, a distinct Person from the Word, *who was GOD over all*. The Man Christ might be properly said to have died, but he could not be said to be the true and living GOD. And on the other hand the Word might be GOD, but he could not be said to ³ *redeem the Church with his own Blood*. The Blood that was shed, not being the Blood of Him who was GOD, but of quite another Person, who was a *mere Man*, and therefore could not be of sufficient Value to redeem the Church. And indeed

SUCH Distinction of Persons in Christ, in the *Word made Flesh*, would quite destroy his Office as Mediator, and render him utterly incapable of discharging it. For GOD could not suffer and die for Sin, and though Man could die, he could not by dying atone for Sin, and render GOD propitious and reconcileable to Sinners. The Death of a single Man, however innocent and holy, could never make Reparation to GOD, for the Sins of the whole World, nor sufficiently vindicate his Honour, assert the Authority of his Laws, or manifest his Displeasure against Sin.

AND thus far I think we are clear from the whole Tenor of the holy Scriptures. The two Natures of Christ are so united in Him,

² Rom. ix. 3.

³ Acts xx. 28.

SERM. IV. as to constitute one single Person. And hereupon, *sometimes* He is spoken of in Scripture, under a *Divine Character*, and those Things are attributed to him, which are proper to that Character. As here in the Context, for Instance, where he is said to be GOD, and it is hereupon asserted that ^b *He made all Things, and without him, was not any one Thing made, that was made.*

SOMETIMES he is spoken of under an *human Character*, and those Things are attributed to him, which belong to that Character. The whole Evangelical History of his Birth, Education, Life and Death may be produced as Instances.

SOMETIMES he is spoken of under a *Divine Character or Title*, and yet Things are attributed to Him, that properly can belong only to his *human Nature*. Thus it is said by Himself, ^c *I am the First and the Last, I am He who liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.* He who was first and last, and could never die, yet here asserts, concerning Himself, that he was dead. He died in that human Nature which he had assumed into Personal Union: As the First and Last he could not die. And on the other hand

SOMETIMES He is spoken of under *the Character of a Man*, when yet some Things are attributed to Him, which are proper to him as GOD only. Thus though he calls himself the Son of Man, and at that time was conversant among Men, yet at the same time he asserts that ^d *he was in Heaven*, which could then be true only of his Divine Nature; for

^b Acts xx. 3. ^c Rev. i. 17, 18. ^d John iii. 13.

his human Nature could not, at one and the same time, be in any two Places, much less in such distant Places, as Earth and Heaven. In the same Sense said *John the Baptist* of Him, *He that cometh after me, was before me.* Again,

SOME Things are spoken of him under either Character, which yet belong to him only in his double Capacity. Thus the *Man Christ Jesus* is said to be the *Mediator between GOD and Men*, which yet is an Office belonging to both Natures. On the other hand *GOD* is said to have *redeemed the Church with his own Blood*, and He is stiled *GOD our Saviour*; whereas it is certain that he redeems and saves us as *GOD-MAN*, as *Immanuel*. And finally,

SOMETIMES He has his personal Name and Character given him in holy Scriptures, and those Things are attributed to him which are proper to it. Thus is it said when he is called Christ, that *He died for Sinners*, that *He ought to have suffered*, that *He hath redeemed us*, that *He is the Head of the Church*, and *the Church is subject to Him*. And so when he is called *Jesus Christ*, which is also a Personal Title, it is said that *GOD will judge the secrets of all Hearts by Him*, that *we shall reign in Life through one Jesus Christ*, that *we have the Victory over Death and the Grave through*

^e John i. 15.

^f 1 Tim. ii. 5.

^g Acts xx. 28.

^h Tit. ii. 10.

ⁱ Rom. v. 8.

^k Luke xxiv. 26.

^l Gal. iii. 13.

^m Eph. v. 23, 24.

ⁿ Rom. ii. 16.

^o Rom. v. 17.

^p 1 Cor. xv. 57.

SERM. IV. *Him, &c.* All which variety of Expression concerning Him, is to make it appear, that in *both his Natures*, He is no more than *one single Person*. And thus far we may go with Truth and Safety.

THERE are many who have gone farther, and fancied, I know not how many, imaginary Resemblances of this mysterious Union, in Nature. But there is nothing in the whole Frame of Nature, that will fully answer it, or help us to clearer Notions about it, than may be had from the scriptural Account of it, here given. That which comes nearest to it, is the Union of our Souls and Bodies, into one Person. Their Nature is certainly very different, and they make one Person, upon their Union. But this will not in all Things answer. For they never subsisted separately, neither of them subsisted before the Union, nor was a compleat Person till united; whereas though the human Nature of Christ never was in being, till assumed by the Word, yet the Word had subsisted from Eternity, and was not made a compleat Person by assuming Humanity, but was always so, and as much before as afterward. Besides, that the Soul in personal Union with the Body, is made to depend on it in many of its Operations, which dependance of the Word upon his human Nature is utterly impossible. The Mediator indeed would not have discharged his Office, without an human Body. But this is nothing to the *Logos*, or Divine Nature of Christ in it self considered: This cannot be dependant on any Creature in its Operations, or be helped or hindered by it, which is the Case many times of the Soul in Union with the Body.

YET

YET in some Things there is a Resemblance between the Union of Soul and Body in a Man, and the Union of the two Natures in Christ. For here are two Natures, Body and Mind, united into one Person, and these Natures as really *different* from each other, though not as *distant*, as GOD and Man. And upon this Union, a Man may be said to be tall, fair, fat, healthy, &c. from the Form and Frame of his Body, when none of these Properties can be, in the same Sense, ascribed to his Mind. And he may be termed learned, wise, good, &c. from the Endowments and Temper of his Mind, when nothing of this kind, can belong to his Body, as such. Those Things may be attributed to the Person which belong to either of the Natures. Nay, when one of the Natures only is mentioned, those Things may be attributed to it, which properly belong only to the other Nature. And thus we say in common Speech, *every Soul of them shall die*, when yet the Soul cannot die. And on the other hand *every Body knows it*, when yet the Body, properly speaking, can know nothing. Just as *the Word* is said to be *made Flesh*, to be born, and die, and shed his Blood, though the Divine Nature could properly do neither, and the *Son of Man* could say of Himself, whilst here on Earth, that he was in Heaven, when yet his human Nature, by virtue of which he was Son of Man, could not at once be in Heaven and on Earth. And just as *Christ Jesus* is said to have been in the Form of GOD, and to be made in the Likeness of sinful Flesh. For Christ is a Title belonging to the Person, and of Christ it may be truly said he was GOD, and he was Man. He made all Things, and

SERM. IV. yet himself was made: He was from Eternity, *without beginning of Days or end of Life*; and he was born, and about seventeen hundred Years ago began to live, continued for some Time in Life, and then died upon the Cross. There is nothing absurd or contradictory in this, seeing every one will apprehend, that these contradictory Propositions are not to be understood of the *same*, but *different* Natures. The same Man may be said to be mortal, and yet not to be mortal, without any Contradiction; since every one will understand, that he is said to be mortal, with regard to his Body, which certainly *will die*, and immortal, with respect to his Mind, which in the Sense in which the Body does, never *can die*.

So that, though there be not a perfect Correspondence and Congruity between the Union of Soul and Body, and that of the two Natures in the Person of Christ, in all Particulars, yet in some it may be truly said, there is a very great Resemblance.

AND thus have I done what was necessary to explain my Text. What remains is *to make Improvement*. Several Things might be hence collected for our Information, but I shall satisfy my self with the following practical Conclusions, and Rules of Behaviour. And

I. *First*, THIS Truth *should engage our Admiration, and our Gratitude*. For why was the *Word made Flesh*, but because *all Flesh had corrupted its Way*? The whole Race of Mankind had revolted from GOD, and were become obnoxious to his Justice and Wrath, and stood in need of an Almighty Helper, to deliver them from the Plague and Poison of Sin, and the Curse and condemning Sentence of the Law.

In

In this miserable Plight GOD was pleas'd to behold and pity Us, and the eternal Word offers to be Mediator between GOD and his offending Creatures, and consents to be *made Flesh*, that He might be capable of dying and shedding his most precious Blood, to redeem lost Souls, and procure Remission of Sins. This was the immediate Intention of his being made Man. ^q *A Body was prepared for Him*, that when it was not possible the Blood of Bulls and Goats should take away Sin, He might, ^r *by his Blood, purge our Consciences from dead Works, to serve the living GOD.*

Now, was it not an amazing Instance of Condescension that the *Word should be made Flesh*? That He ^s *who was in the Form of GOD*, and ^t *thought it no Robbery to be equal with GOD*, should take upon him the Form of a *Servant*; and that this should be done, that he might humble himself, and become obedient to Death, even the Death of the Cross! That ^u *He who knew no Sin*, should ^x *be made in the Likeness of sinful Flesh*, that in the Flesh, GOD

^q Heb. x. 4.

^r Heb. ix. 14.

^s Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8.

^t This is the most literal Version of ἀπαρσεν ἐκ ἡρώτων; and seeing the Phrase no where else occurs in sacred Writ, nor strictly speaking in any known Author besides (Plutarch using the Noun ἀπαρσιν, and Heliodorus ἀπαρσιν, not ἀπαρσινος, the Word used by the Apostle) why should we depart from the

literal Meaning, unless it contained an Absurdity, or manifest Contradiction in it to other Scriptures, which it plainly does not, upon Supposition that other Scriptures assert our Saviour's real Godhead. He who is true GOD, could never count it an Act of Rapine to be equal to GOD.

^u 2 Cor. v. 21.

^x Rom. viii. 3.

SERM. IV. might condemn Sin, by making Him ¹ a Sin-Of-
 fering! And all this out of Love to provoking
 and rebellious Creatures, who had deeply wrong-
 ed, and greatly dishonoured him, and could ne-
 ver benefit him, or make him Reparation!
 What an Instance is this of glorious Grace and
 Good-Will! Astonishing Condescension of
 God! Do not Angels celebrate this amazing
 Stoop of Majesty, with the loudest Songs and
 Hallelujahs? And should not we, who are so
 deeply interested in it, admire, and adore, and
 applaud it with the utmost Gratitude, with
 the most joyful Praises, and the most devout
 Thanksgivings? Should not ² our Souls mag-
 nify the L O R D, and our Spirits be glad in
 G O D our Saviour? Who hath not only ^a con-
 sidered us in our low Estate, but ^b though he was
 rich, made himself poor for our sakes, that we
 through his Poverty might be made rich? What!
 G O D become Man, that sinful Man might
 not perish in his Sins, without Help or Hope!
 And not only become Man, but a Man of no
 Reputation, of mean Rank and Condition, a
 poor, despised and persecuted Man, and at last
 make his Grave with the wicked, and be num-
 bered with Transgressors! And this for our
 sakes, for the Redemption and Salvation of
 Worms, of sinful Dust and Ashes! Wonder, oh
 Heavens! and be astonished, oh Earth! What

¹ That this is the meaning of
 the Text (which is hardly Sense,
 in our Translation) is plain to
 all that advert to it, ὁ Θεὸς ὁ
 ἐαυτὸν υἱὸν ἑμψυχὸν ἐν ὁμοιωμα-
 τὶ σαρκὸς ἀμαρτίας, & ἐν ἀμαρ-
 τίας κατέβηκεν τὴν ἀμαρτίαν,
 ἐν τῇ σαρκί, which plainly sig-

nifies in English, G O D send-
 ing his Son in the Likeness of
 sinful Flesh, and to be a Sin-
 Offering, condemned Sin in the
 Flesh. Vid. SERM. 16.

² Luke i. 46, 47.

^a Verse 48.

^b 2 Cor. viii. 9.

Tongue can tell, or Heart can think, how vast SERM. VI.
 a Debt of Love, and Wonder, and Thankful-
 ness, we owe to the Lord of Life and Glory,
 for such Grace and Condescension? Let our
 Hearts adore, and our Lips praise Him.

II. *Secondly*, We should be *provoked to the Imitation of this great Example.* We can't indeed *fully* resemble Him, in his Love and Condescension. We must be as great and good as He, to be fully like him. To aim at this, were to aspire at being GOD: A Thing impossible in *it self*, and criminal to the last Degree to attempt. But we should endeavour to be as like him as we can. This is Apostolical Injunction. *Let the same Mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.* And what that Mind was the Context will inform us. Where the Humility, and Condescension, and great Good-Will of our LORD, are represented in the fairest Light, and most beautiful Colouring. Let us imitate him in the Benignity of our Dispositions, and the Humility of *our Hearts.* Nothing is more becoming in a Christian than this happy *Complexion* and *Temperament* of Mind; a due Mixture of Lowliness and Beneficence. What an happy World should we have, and what happy Churches, did all who bear the Name of Christ, did all who we may hope are Christians in Sincerity, labour with all their Might to be, in these Respects, as like their blessed LORD and Master as they could! When *he was GOD over all blessed for ever*, how low did he stoop for our sakes, how deeply did he humble himself, how heartily did he pity, and love, and help, and save his Enemies? He was

SERM. IV. wholly free and voluntary in his Condescension. *He humbled Himself.* He was under no *Command* or *Constraint* to do it. Nor could any Reason be assigned for it, but his unbounded and unmerited Good-Will to sinful Men.

BUT how much Reason have we to be humble? To have low, and vile Thoughts, indeed, of our selves? How narrow is the Compass of our Minds, how imperfect our Knowledge at best, how great our Ignorance? How naughty our Hearts, how defective our Performances, how manifold and heinous our Transgressions? How much do we need the Pity, and Help, and Forbearance, and Forgiveness of our Fellow-Creatures, and our Fellow-Christians? And shall we not, by the Influence of our LORD'S Example, be worked into a modest and humble Opinion of *our selves*, into a candid and kind Opinion of *Others*, and a benign Disposition, and benevolent Behaviour towards them?

WHAT sign is it, that we heartily believe, or have deeply studied, this great Truth of the *Word's being made Flesh*, and the glorious Grace and Condescension manifested therein, if we are proud, and clamorous, and quarrellsome? If we must have our own *Wills*, and our own *Way*, and our own *Words* take place, or else resolve to set our selves against all who differ from us, and run them down with hard Names, worry them with Reproaches, distress them with *negative Discouragements*, if not with open and outrageous Persecution, without trying the Christian Method of sound Reason, strong Argument, and soft and tender Usage? My Brethren, let not you and I *so learn Christ*, nor any of the Doctrines of his holy Religion.

Let

^a *Let all Anger, and Clamour, and Bitterness, and Wrath, and Evil-speaking be put away from us with all Malice. And let us be kind one to another, and tender hearted, after the Example of our blessed Master.* SERM. IV.

III. *Thirdly, LET us hence take Encouragement to draw nigh to GOD, and keep nigh to him.* The very worst among us, may now approach him with Comfort and Hope, and seek Reconciliation. He is no Stranger to *human Nature*, much less an Enemy to it; since He hath been pleased to take it into so near Relation, into such close Union, with his own. Nay, GOD has condescended in this manner, to bring about a Reconciliation, between him and his fallen Creatures. *GOD the Word was made Flesh*, that he might *make Peace by the Blood of his Cross.*

THE very worst and vilest among Men, and the most distressed in their own Minds; They who have the deepest Convictions of Sin, and the most dreadful Apprehensions of Divine Wrath and Vengeance, may yet take Encouragement from hence, to approach their offended Sovereign. For they *have an Advocate with the Father*, who is GOD and Man in the Person of *Jesus Christ*, and in the Office of *Mediator between GOD and Man.* There is nothing can bar their Hopes of Mercy, but their own Diffidence and Impenitency. All who are convinced, humbled for Sin, brought to know and feel their need of such a Saviour, and are made truly willing to be saved by Him, *in the Way, and upon the Terms of the Gospel*, may encourage themselves to hope in his Mer-

^a Eph. iv. 31, 32. ^c Col. i. 20. ^f 1 John ii. 1.

SERM. IV. *cy*, and in the Mercy of GOD through Him, and may with humble Boldness draw nigh to GOD, and seek Pardon, Grace and Favour.

BUT as for those who believe in Christ, and through Him are actually reconciled to GOD, what Encouragement should they take, from this Doctrine, to draw nigh to GOD both in publick and private, and *be much with him*? In how close an Union is the Word with human Nature? And how close must the Alliance then be between GOD and Man? And should not those who are reconciled to him in Christ, keep up the Friendship? And live and walk as closely with GOD as possible? The Apostle's Inference from hence, is that *we should come boldly to a Throne of Grace*, or in other Words, that *we should draw nigh with a true Heart in full Assurance of Faith*. Surely, when GOD has in so surprizing a Manner made himself a-kin to Men, those who believe, should with all Humility and Thankfulness, claim Kindred with him, and live in the closest Bonds and Exercises of the dearest Friendship.

IV. *And lastly*, THIS should direct us, to put a due Value on human Nature, and make it appear by our whole Conduct, that we do so. How is our Nature dignified indeed, when it is in such strict Union with GOD the Word? And shall any of us, who believe this, neglect or debase our selves, or act as if we were insensible of the Worth and Dignity of our Natures?

How much should every one of us be concerned, that *our Souls be saved*, when our Re-

^g Heb. iv. 16,

^h Heb. x. 22.

deemer valued them at such a Rate, and stoopt SERM. IV.
so low, and suffered so much for their Salvation?

How much should all of us who are concerned to be saved, make it our Endeavour that our Minds be rendered daily *more and more Divine*, and resembling GOD? That as the Word, has been pleased to take an human Mind, into such near Relation to Himself, we may labour heartily, that our Minds bear as full a Resemblance of GOD, as possible.

AND should we not be concerned also that we *do not pollute our Bodies*, or abuse them by any kind of Intemperance, when GOD hath honoured the human Body to such a Degree, by assuming One, and making it *his own Body*? Should we not rather consecrate them, and make them Temples of his holy Spirit?

How necessary is this Caution, at such a Season, when Men pretend to celebrate *the Nativity of Christ*, but too commonly act, as if they were loose from all the Obligations of *his Religion*, if not from those of *common Morality*. Let not us in such a manner commemorate the *Word's being made Flesh*. But whether the Day be religiously observed by us or no, let us now, and at all times, live up to the Dignity of our Nature, and keep up the Honour and Credit of our holy Religion.

Which GOD of his Mercy grant, for our Redeemer's sake, to whom be Glory and Honour for ever. Amen.





*The pouring forth of the Holy Ghost
on the Apostles the Effect of our
Saviour's Exaltation.*

A

S E R M O N

Preached in the *OLD JEWRY*,
June 5, 1720, being *Whitsunday*.

ACTS ii. 33.

*Therefore being by the right Hand of GOD
exalted, and having received of the Fa-
ther the Promise of the Holy Ghost, He
hath shed forth this, which you now see
and hear.*

SERM. V.



WE have, in this Chapter, the Histo-
ry of as remarkable an Event, as
any upon Record in the sacred
Writings. I mean the *pouring
forth of the Holy Spirit* upon the
Apostles, to qualify them with miraculous
Powers, and miraculous Speech, for the Dis-
charge of that Office, to which they were
called,

called, *i. e.* ^a *To be Witnesses to Christ in Jerusalem, and all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost Parts of the Earth.* SERM. V.

UPON the Descent of the Spirit on them, we are here told, ^b *That they began to speak with Tongues, as the Spirit gave them Utterance.* To speak variety of Languages, as he prompted and gave them Ability. And it being on a solemn Festival of the *Jews* that this happened, when great Multitudes of that People, who had long before by War and Captivity been scattered into all the neighbouring Lands, and into many far distant, were assembled at *Jerusalem*, it could not but make a great Noise. Nor is it to be wondred at, if the Report should draw many of the several Nations, to be Witnesses of so unusual and miraculous an Event. Or that they should be all surprized to hear Men of no high Quality or Extraction, of but vulgar Education and Employment, yet speaking in the proper Dialect of *Parthians*, and *Medes* and *Elamites*, the Languages of *Capadocia*, *Phrygia*, *Egypt*, *Arabia*, *Lybia*, nay, and *Rome* it self; and this of a sudden, when it was well known to every one, that, but the very Day before, they only understood the Language of their own Country, if they did that. No Wonder that they should cry out with Surprise, *Are not* ^c *all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every Man in our own Tongue, wherein we were born? Or being in doubt should ask,* ^d *What meaneth this?*

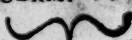
^a Acts i. 8. ^b Chap. ii. 4. ^c Ver. 7. 8. Ver. 12.



BUT the most wonderful Thing in all this Passage is, that any, of all these People, should be so mad, as ^c to mock at the astonishing and evident Appearances of Divine Power, and ascribe the miraculous Speech of the Apostles, to the *Fumes of new Wine*. Must not they be perfectly drunk with Spleen or Passion, with Prejudice or Malice, that could believe Men thus indued, and able in such Variety of Languages to discourse of, and display, the *μεγαλεῖα τῷ Θεῷ*, *magnalia Dei*, the wonderful Works of GOD, were only gone in Liquor? Could they who spake so properly, in so many several Languages, and so magnificently of GOD, of his Power and Wisdom appearing in his Works, and particularly in the Resurrection and Exaltation of Christ, be intoxicated with the Fumes of new Wine? This is plainly the Language of those who dream, if they do not rave.

IT was a thing in Nature most improbable, that Wine should produce such Effects. Was ever such a Thing heard of, as a Drunkard's being inspired by his Liquor, with the Knowledge of *one New Tongue*? Such, many times, drink away the Power of speaking plainly and intelligibly in their Mother Tongue; but never one acquired, by his Wine, a Power of speaking well, and to the Purpose, in *one foreign Language*, much less in such *Variety of Languages*, as these Men heard the Apostles speak.

BUT the Suggestion was not only absurd in it self, but altogether ill-timed; it being not the Season for new Wine. This great Event happened, as we are here told, at ^f *Pentecost*,

long before the Grapes were ripe, and fit for SERM. V.
the Press. 

AND *Peter* confutes and silences this slanderous Suggestion at once, by telling them *the Men were not drunken, as they supposed, it being yet but the third Hour of the Day*, (about Nine a-Clock in the Morning, according to our way of speaking) the Time of their *Morning Prayers*. Now Men of any Character for Virtue or Sobriety, were so far from being intoxicated with Wine so early, among the *Jews*, that they were commonly fasting till that Time. And on their more solemn Days, such as these of *Pentecost*, they were usually fasting till high Noon. But what they saw and heard he tells them was the Completion of an ^h ancient Prophecy. And then ⁱ proceeds to explain to them how it was accomplished in this manner, namely, by the Resurrection of that *Jesus of Nazareth*, whom GOD had so mightily approved amongst them, as they knew, and whom yet they had taken, and with wicked Hands had slain. This *Jesus* had GOD raised up, according to the Prophecy of ^k *David*. Of which, adds the Apostle, *we are Witnesses*, as having perfect and certain Knowledge of the Fact, and a Commission and Credentials from GOD, to testify it to the World. And Christ having been raised up, and exalted by the Right-hand of GOD, and having received of the Father the Promise of the Holy Ghost, had now sealed their Commission by shedding forth his Spirit, and producing that wonderful Effect, of which they were all *Eye and Ear-Witnesses*. They saw the

^s Acts ii. 15. ^h Ver. 16. ⁱ Ver. 22, &c. ^k Ver. 32.

SERM. V. Men, and they heard them speak Variety of Languages which they had never learnt.

Now this, the Apostle tells them, was a very convincing Proof, and clear and uncontrollable Evidence, *that He was Lord and Christ.* For thus he closes his Discourse, *therefore let all the House of Israel know assuredly.* Let it be a Matter past all Doubt with them, saith *Æcumenius, that GOD hath made that Jesus Christ whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ.* This is Evidence of it not to be controlled, which ye now see and hear. In this View I shall also consider the Passage. *Three Things* are plainly expressed in the Text, and there is a *fourth* manifestly implied in the Apostle's way of Arguing, to each of which I shall speak somewhat, and then endeavour to make some Improvement.

I. *First*, IT is here plainly asserted, that the Gift of Tongues, poured out, at this Time, on the Apostles, *was the Gift of Christ*, i. e. of the Mediator. *He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.*

II. *Secondly*, *THAT* his bestowing this Gift, was the Result of his Exaltation by the Right-hand of *GOD.* Therefore being exalted by the Right-hand of *GOD*, he hath shed forth, &c.

III. *Thirdly*, *THIS* is said to have been done, upon his receiving the Promise of the Holy Ghost. And having received of the Father the Promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth, &c.

IV. *Lastly*, IT is here implied, that this was convincing and uncontrollable Evidence, that he

was constituted of GOD, both Lord and Christ, SERM. V.
the true Messiah, the Saviour of Mankind, and
their Lord Redeemer. Of each I shall speak in
Order. And

I. *First*, IT is here plainly asserted, that *the miraculous Gift of Tongues*, referred to in this Passage, was bestowed on the Apostles by our Lord Jesus Christ: He hath shed forth what you see and hear. This Gift was a Power to speak the Language of any Nation, without the Pains of learning it, and that with such Readiness and Ease, as to be able to preach and discourse in that Language, even of the deep Things of GOD, and that Magnificence of his, which doth most conspicuously shine out in the whole Christian Constitution.

INDEED, all had not equal Endowments of this kind. And therefore Paul, in rebuke to the Corinthians, who valued themselves very much upon this Gift, and made much Ostentation of it, tells them, ^m *I thank GOD, I speak with Tongues more than you all.* The Divine Wisdom dealt out this Gift according to the Purposes for which it was bestowed, and therefore in various Measure and Proportion. It was not bestowed for Ostentation, but for Use. Not to gratify and feed the Pride of those *who had it*, but for the Good and Spiritual Advantage of *others*. It was given to enable the Apostles, and other Ministers employed in the same Work, to spread the Doctrine of the Gospel more speedily and easily, where-ever they came, or, to confirm the Truth of what

^m 1 Cor. xiv. 18.

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they taught. And, in this Respect, it was indeed a *standing Miracle*. Those who readily and aptly spoke a Language they never learnt, and that upon every Occasion that offered, must do it by a Power extraordinary and supernatural. And whoever heard them must be convinced of this, if they at the same time knew the Language they spoke, had not been acquired by them in the ordinary way, but had been infused into them at once, without any Pains or Application of theirs.

Now *some* might be inspired in this manner for *confirming* the Truth of the Gospel, who were not inspired for *spreading* the Doctrine and Rules of it. But those who had the largest Compass assigned them, by the Spirit of God, for spreading the Light of the Gospel, and were to go amongst the greatest variety of People and Languages, had, ordinarily speaking, the largest Proportion of this Gift.

BUT in whatever Proportion it was given forth, (which was always such as would best answer its general Intention) it was *the Gift of Christ*. It was bestowed by Him. Indeed this and other miraculous Powers are stiled ⁿ *the Gifts of the Holy Ghost*. And the Apostle Paul tells us, ^o that *to one is given, by the Spirit, the Word of Wisdom, to another the Word of Knowledge, to another the Gifts of Healing, to another the Working of Miracles, to another divers Kinds of Tongues, to another the Interpretation of Tongues; but all these worketh one and the same Spirit*. And his Agency herein is so certain, that these very Gifts are called the *Holy Ghost*. And giving this miraculous Power to others,

ⁿ Heb. ii. 4.

^o 1 Cor. xii. 8, 12.

which

which the Apostles were enabled to do, *is called* ^{SERM. V.} *giving the Holy Ghost.* And hence the Holy Ghost is said not ^q *to have been given* whilst our Saviour was on Earth, *because he was not then glorified.* That is, these miraculous Powers were not given forth whilst he was on Earth, but were to be communicated by the Spirit upon his Exaltation, here called *his being glorified.*

BUT though this be indeed the Gift of the *holy Spirit*, and the immediate Effect of his Power and Operation, yet is it nevertheless the Gift of *Christ*. Inasmuch as the Spirit, in the *Æconomy* of the Gospel, is the Redeemer's Substitute and Vicegerent in this Matter, and acts, as it were, by Commission from him. He therefore promised his Disciples before his Death, that He ^r *would send them this Comforter or Advocate* παρακλητῆς, *from the Father.* And again, ^r *if I depart, I will send the Comforter unto you.* Hence is the Holy Ghost called the Spirit of Christ. ^s *If any Man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.*

So that this Spirit being the Spirit of Christ, and acting in this Office in his Name, and Stead, what he works of this kind in Men, is yet properly the Gift of Christ. The Spirit, who immediately conveys these miraculous Powers, being sent from Him, and sent for this very End and Purpose. And hereupon is it said, that, ^a *to every one of us is given Grace, according to the Measure of the Gift of Christ,*

^p Acts xv. 8.

^q John vii. 39.

^r John xv. 26.

^r John xvi. 7.

^r Rom. viii. 9.

^s Eph. iv. 7, 8.

SERM. V. *who, when he ascended up on high, led Captivity captive, and gave Gifts to Men.*

THIS Proposition therefore, as I conceive, is plain enough. This Power of speaking Tongues is of the immediate Operation of the Spirit, but inasmuch as this Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, and acts in this Matter as his Substitute, and by Commission *from him*, it may very properly be said to be *the Gift of Christ*.

II. Secondly, **THE** bestowing this Gift, results from his Exaltation by the right Hand of GOD. Being by the right Hand of GOD exalted, he hath shed forth what you see and hear. Now he was exalted by the right Hand of GOD, or by his Power, in his Resurrection from the Dead, his being taken up into Heaven, and invested with Power and Authority over all Things, for the Benefit of his Church, and the Salvation of his People. To this Purpose another Apostle tells us, that ** because he made himself of no Reputation, and took on him the Form of a Servant, and was found in the Likeness of Men; and being found in Fashion like a Man, he became obedient to Death, even the Death of the Cross. Therefore GOD hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name above every Name; that at the Name of Jesus every Knee should bow, of Things in Heaven, and Things in Earth, and Things under the Earth; and that every Tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of GOD the Father.* This is his being exalted by the right Hand of GOD, or as some think it should be rendered, *to the right Hand of GOD*, is, to the Dignity and

Pre-eminence, of which the Apostle *Paul* here SERM. V. speaks. When he was taken up into Heaven, and seated at the *right Hand of Power*, and the *Majesty on high*, and declared Head of his Church, and Sovereign Lord of all Things, he was exalted of GOD.

AND it is in Consequence of this Exaltation, and being put in full Possession of the *Mediatorial Power and Government*, that He gives out the Spirit, and confers his miraculous Gifts. It is hereupon assigned as a Reason, why the Holy Ghost was not given, during his Ministry on Earth, at least not in so eminent a Degree, that ¹ *He was not yet glorified*, i. e. not yet raised to that Dignity and Power, which would be the Reward of his Sufferings and Death, after he was risen again. Indeed in his divine Nature he could not be raised higher than he was, or have any new Accessions of Power beyond what he originally had. But as Mediator he might be exalted, being GOD and Man in the Person *Jesus Christ*. And though his human Nature alone was capable of proper Exaltation, it might properly be said, upon his receiving, in that Nature, such Power and Dignity as he had not before, that ² *He Himself* was exalted. The Exaltation of the human Nature being a proper Exaltation of the Person. And though the Son of GOD could not be made higher than He was, it is very plain that the Mediator might, he being the *Son of Man*, as well as the *Son of GOD*.

BUT the Son of GOD himself was capable of being exalted, though not by an increase of essential Glory, yet by being declared and re-

¹ John vii. 39.

² Vid. Serm. iv.

cognized as Lord of Mankind, and of the Universe by a new Title, viz. as Redeemer and Saviour of Mankind. By creating the World GOD acquired no new Glory, he was not a whit more blessed, powerful, perfect, or more GOD in any Respect, than he was before; yet hereupon he became Creator of all Things, and had rightful Claim to all the Homage naturally due from them to their Maker; part of which Homage is to be praised by them, for the glorious Appearances of Divine Wisdom, and Power, and Goodness on all the Works of his Hands. And this is frequently in holy Scriptures called *exalting GOD, and magnifying him, or making him great.* You have both Expressions in one Text. *2 O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his Name together.* To this purpose saith the Prophet, ** Ob LORD, thou art my GOD, I will exalt Thee, I will praise thy Name; for thou hast done wonderful Things.*

It is granted, indeed, that this is not to be taken in the same Sense, as *our Saviour* is said to be exalted by the right Hand of GOD. But it is plain that the Phrase is used where no Accession of Power, Privilege, or any Perfection is implied. And our Saviour might therefore be said *to be exalted*, when he was declared of the Father, and owned by all the heavenly Hosts as LORD of Mankind, and of the Universe, upon the Title of Redemption. Though this Declaration and Recognition did not make him more their LORD than he was before, nor enlarge his Dominion over them (this being absolute, as he was their Creator and Maker) yet it declared their Homage to be due

² Psalm xxxiv. 3. ^{*} Esai. xxv. 1.

upon a new Title and Claim, which was certainly glorious to our Redeemer, and for his Honour. Thus is it said that, ^b *He was declared to be the Son of GOD with Power, by his Resurrection from the Dead.* He was not made the Son of GOD by his Resurrection: This He was from Eternity. But by his Resurrection he was manifested to be the Son of GOD. This evidenced to the World, who and what he was. And it was an Honour to him to stand thus distinguished, though it did not make him more honourable *in Himself*, or more the Son of GOD than he was before. He might as GOD the Son ^c *be highly exalted*, that is, *have a Name given him above every Name*, or be declared LORD Redeemer, LORD over all, upon Account of his having ransomed sinful Mankind, without having any increase of Dominion, or Accession of real Dignity and Glory.

BUT *as Mediator*, he was plainly capable of being exalted in the proper Sense, being Man as well as GOD; and what is proper to either Nature, may be ascribed to the Person bearing this Office. Now as Mediator He was raised from the Dead, and *exalted to the right Hand of GOD*. He was made Head and LORD over all Things, and in the Exercise of this Sovereignty, had Power and Authority to bestow these miraculous Gifts. During his Ministry on Earth, which was in a State of Humiliation, he was not in plenary Possession of his Royalty, nor Exercise of his Power; and therefore was he not authorized to bestow these Gifts, at least not in so full a Measure, and to

^a Rom. i. 4.

^c Phil. ii. 9.

The pouring forth of the

SERM. V. so high a Degree, as after his Exaltation to the right Hand of GOD. ^d *He must first go away, before the Paraclete would come.* It was ^e *when he ascended up on high, that He gave Gifts to Men.* All Power in Heaven and Earth was then eminently committed to Him. For ^f *for this End he both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be LORD both of the Dead and Living.* Though he was LORD both of the Living and Dead, as the Divine Logos before his Incarnation, and during his Life, yet he was not the LORD of them as Redeemer, till they were actually purchased, which was by his Death. And as Man he was not to ^g *lift up the Head till he had drank of the Brook, nor* ^h *enter into his Glory, which was to be the Reward of his sufferings, till he had suffered.* So that as Mediator He was not invested with his full Powers till he was taken up into Heaven. It was ⁱ *after he had offered his one Sacrifice for Sin, that he sate down at the right Hand of GOD.* ^k *When He had by himself purged our Sins, that he sate down on the right Hand of the Majesty on high, or took full Possession of his Mediatorial Kingdom, and had all the Powers belonging to it conferred upon Him, in both his Natures.* Then, and not till then was he in full Exercise of his Mediatorial Trust. And not till then had he Authority to bestow this Gift, and dispense the holy Spirit for this End.

^d John xvi. 7.^e Eph. iv. 8.^f Rom. xiv. 9.^g Psalm cx. 7.^h Luke xxiv. 26.ⁱ Heb. x. 12.^k Heb. i. 3.

IN this Sense, I think, we are to understand SERM. V. the Passage, that our Saviour's Authority to dispense the Spirit, in this miraculous Manner, followed upon his Exaltation. This *Jesus of Nazareth*, the Man *Christ Jesus*, in Union with the Divine Word, and in the Office and Character of a Mediator, was impowered to do, after his rising from the Dead, and his ¹ *being received up to Glory*. Again,

III. *Thirdly*, HE had his Power of bestowing this Gift, *by virtue of the Promise he had received of the Father*, for he had now actually received what the Father had promised. In his exalted State he had received, what the Father had promised in his State of Humiliation. *Then* the Promise of the Spirit was made, and *now* was accomplished and made good. And being accomplished, he shed forth what was then heard and seen.

WE are told at the beginning of this sacred Book, that he charged his Disciples not to depart from *Jerusalem*, but ^m *to wait there for the Promise of the Father*, which, adds He, *ye have heard of me*, i. e. the Promise of ⁿ *being baptized with the Holy Ghost*, which, he tells them, should happen to them not many Days after. It is probable, that it was the last Day, of his Continuance with them on Earth, that this Charge was given, which was the fourteenth Day after his Resurrection. Now his Resurrection having been on the first Day of the Week, just after the *Passover*, and there being fifty Days from the *Passover* to this Festival (whence the Name *Pentecost*) it must follow, that within ten Days our Saviour had

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

^m Acts i. 4.

ⁿ Ver. 5.

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made good his Promise, and the holy Spirit was sent down in the Shape of *cloven Tongues*, to inspire them with the Gift of Tongues, and several other miraculous Powers. And this is *the Promise of the Father*, of which the Apostle here speaks. And hence we find in the *Evangelist* our Saviour expressing himself thus to his Disciples, ° *Behold I send the Promise of my Father upon you.* And the Comforter is said to be sent by Him *from the Father*. Who had promised Him, that he should have *this Power*, and accordingly upon his Exaltation conferred it on Him.

THIS Promise therefore being now fulfilled to our Saviour, and the Dispensation of the Spirit put into his Hands, he poured it forth at this time in those miraculous Gifts, of which there were so many Eye and Ear Witnesses. GOD was *faithful who had promised*, and therefore did not fail of making good what he had promised, and therefore our Redeemer, even *Jesus of Nazareth*, was enabled to act in this astonishing manner, and confer such Gifts on his despised Followers, as was to the Surprise and Amazement of the whole World. Though the *Jews* had treated him with the utmost Scorn and Disdain, with the rudest Spite, and most raging Barbarity, and at last had with *wicked Hands taken and slain him*, yet could he not be held by the Bands of Death, nor be long obnoxious to such spiteful Treatment. For being raised from the Dead, and taken up to Heaven, and exalted there to the highest Dignity and Power, and having received the Promise made him by his Father, that he should

° Luke xxiv. 49.

P John xv. 26.

have the Dispensation of the Spirit to serve the SERM. V. Purposes of his *Mediatorial Administration*, and spread the Gospel, he was authorized and enabled to confer such miraculous Powers on his Disciples, as astonished the World, how much sorer they were despised in it, for their mean Condition and outward Appearance.

NOR does our Saviour's having received this Power, and that by virtue of his Father's Promise, infer at all that he is a dependent Being, much less a mere Man. A true and real Man he certainly was, and therefore many Things may be spoken of him as Mediator, to which both Natures were necessary, that, strictly speaking, can belong only to one of his Natures. Many Things may be said of him *as Mediator*, that cannot with Truth and Propriety be said of him *as GOD*. As Mediator he might be exalted, have new Dignities and Powers conferred on Him, which can't be strictly said of him as *GOD*. He might therefore have this Power of conferring miraculous Gifts by virtue of a divine Promise, and this a new Power, considering him *as Mediator*, when yet as *GOD* He was immutably and eternally possessed of such a Power, and could never have it *de novo*, or by free Gift and Conveyance.

BUT besides this, Regard is to be had in this Matter, to the *Economy and Dispensation*, in which the Father, and that with great Propriety, He being first in Order, and *Fountain of the Trinity*, sustains the Person and Character of *GOD*, or supreme Legislator, injured by Sin, and reconciling Sinners to Himself. Whilst the Word and Spirit, the second and third Persons, though truly *GOD*, as well as the Father,
are

SERM. V. are spoken of as acting by Commission from Him, in their several Characters of *Mediator* and *Paraclete*. Which certainly may be done by mutual Consent, without their being in proper Subjection to Him, or Dependance on Him, or without divesting them of Deity, or any of the Properties and Prerogatives pertaining to it.

AND *the Son* might, hereupon, be very truly said, to give the holy Spirit in virtue of his Exaltation, and his Father's Promise, without derogating at all from his real Divinity. Because though he be truly GOD, as well as the Father, yet in *this Dispensation*, He doth not sustain the Character of sovereign Legislator, but of Mediator between Him and his offending Subjects; who is therefore to act by Commission from the supreme Ruler, and accordingly He is said to have come into the World to do his Will. [¶] *Lo I come to do thy Will, O GOD.* He is said to have been put into Office, and to have been anointed of GOD. [¶] *He glorified not Himself to be made an High Priest, but He who said to Him, Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee,* i. e. He honoured Him by putting Him into Office. As it is elsewhere said, [¶] *GOD thy GOD hath anointed thee with the Oil of Gladness above thy Fellows.* And again, [¶] *Him hath GOD the Father sealed.* As therefore he acts by Commission from the Father, who in this whole Dispensation sustains the Character of GOD, or sovereign Legislator, it may be said that he received this Power from the Father, and this as

[¶] Heb. x. 7.

[¶] Heb. v. 5.

[¶] Heb. i. 9.

[¶] John vi. 27.

the Accomplishment of a Promise made to Him, without derogating any thing from his Majesty and Perfections as GOD, or without implying at all that he is no divine Person.

So that supposing this to be spoken of him, even with Respect to his highest and divine Nature, there is no Impropriety in it, He being the second of the Trinity in order of Nature, and acting in *this Economy* as Mediator, and so by Commission and Deputation from GOD. But it is spoken in the utmost Propriety of him *as Mediator*, because there is a Nature belonging to him as such, that can be exalted, can have new Powers indeed conferred on it, and that by gracious Promise from GOD. I proceed,

IV. *Fourthly*, To consider *what Evidences our Saviour's* shedding forth these miraculous Gifts, *could give of his being Lord and Christ*. That is to say, of his being the Son of GOD, and Saviour of the World. The glorious Person foretold in ancient Prophecy, and so generally expected at that Time by the People of the *Jews*, and almost all the neighbouring Nations. For the Notion had spread through the East, as the *Roman Historians* inform us, that there was some extraordinary Person, about this Time, to appear in the World. Indeed the *Jews* themselves had very wrong Notions, wherein he was to be so extraordinary, having a

▪ Percrebuerat Oriente totius
vetus & constans Opinio:
esse in fatis ut eo tempore
Judæa profecti rerum potirentur.
Sueton. L. viii. c. 4.
Pluribus persuasio inerat, an-

tiquis sacerdotum literis contineri eo ipso tempore fore
ut valesceret Oriens, profectiq;
Judæa rerum potirentur.
Tacit. Histor. L. v.

SERM. V. Conceit that he was to be a glorious temporal Prince, and a mighty Conqueror, who should set them at the Head of the Nations. And it is no wonder, the same Mistake should be propagated from them, among the other Nations, where they were dispersed.

BUT what Evidence can this Effusion of the Spirit give to this Truth? Or what Support to the Pretensions of our blessed Saviour? The most convincing that can well be. Such clear and strong Proof of his being what he pretended, and of the Truth of what he taught, that some think the denying this Evidence is *the Sin against the Holy Ghost*. Crying down Christianity as an Imposture, by them who were Witnesses to *this Fact*, is, in their Account, that *blaspheming of the Holy Ghost, which is never to be forgiven*. And I am of their Mind thus far, that it is certainly one Branch of it, though I can't say that malicious ascribing our Saviour's Miracles to the Devil is not a Sin of like Malignity, and another Branch of *Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost*. But that I may set this Evidence before you in as plain and strong a Light as possible, I would observe,

I. *First*, THAT the bestowing these miraculous Gifts, *supposes and implies, our Saviour's Resurrection from the Dead*. For it is plain, that had he continued in the Grave, and under the Power of Death, he could never have shed forth what the *Jews* then saw and heard. Had he been still in the Grave, whence should the Apostles have this miraculous Speech? This carried Conviction with it, that he was alive.

Holy Ghost on the Apostles, &c.

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The Apostles knew this, they had seen Him, SERM. V. they had conversed with Him after his Resurrection, they were appointed by him *to be* ^y *Witnesses of this great Truth*, and now by the miraculous Descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, he makes it appear to all the World that he was risen, and had all Power put into his Hand. Had he not been risen, he could not have communicated to them these surprising Powers.

Now had our Saviour been *an Impostor*, and pretended to come from GOD when he did not, or assumed to be what he was not, is it to be believed that He should by his own Power raise Himself from the Dead? Or that the GOD of Truth should work a Miracle for his Revival? Would not this be to abet Imposture, and authorize the Cheat? Would it not establish his Credit in the World, who was the most notorious Deceiver the World ever saw, if he were not indeed the Christ, the Son of GOD, and Saviour of the World? Could the GOD of all Truth vouch for the Credit of such a one, by raising Him from the Dead? Did he not, more than once, give out this, as the *Criterion* and Proof of his Truth and Credibility, that He would rise again from the Dead? Thus when the *Jews* demanded a Sign of him, by what Authority he whipt the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple, ^z *Destroy*, saith He, *this Temple, and in three Days I will build it up*; speaking of the Temple of his Body, as the ^a *Evangelist* informs us. When at another time they asked him a Sign, he told ^b none should be

^y Acts i. 22.

^z John ii. 19.

^a Ver. 21.

^b Matth. xii. 40.

SERM. V. *given them, but that of the Prophet Jonah, for as He was three Days and three Nights in the Whale's Belly, so should the Son of Man be three Days and three Nights in the Heart of the Earth.* From this it is plain that he laid great Stress on his Resurrection from the Dead, and made it the principal Evidence of the Truth of his Doctrine, and the Justice of his Pretensions. So that the Apostle tells the *Corinthians* very truly, that ^c *if Christ be not risen, Faith and Preaching are both vain.*

It is plain therefore, that by his Rising from the Dead, the utmost Credit that can be, must be given to his Doctrine and Pretensions. He having made this the very Sign of his being a true Man, and no Deceiver of the People. It is no wonder therefore, that the Apostle should say that hereby he was ^d *declared, or designated, to be the Son of GOD with Power.*

THE *Jews* were sensible of this, and therefore did what they could to ruin the Credit of his Resurrection. They knew what Stress he laid on it, and therefore assign this as a Reason why *Pilate* should set a Watch, that ^e *this Deceiver whilst he was alive said, after three Days I will rise again.* By which Argument, and their Importunity they prevailed, and had a Watch set. But when they could not prevent his rising, that they might if possible prevent the Fruits of it, and darken the Evidence of his Doctrine, they bribe the Soldiers employed, to defame themselves, by a senseless Report, that his ^f *Disciples came, and stole him away by*

^c 1 Cor. xv. 14.

^d Rom. i. 3.

^e Matth. xxvii. 63.

^f Chap. xxviii. 13.

Night. Whereas, if they were awake when the Disciples came, why did they not prevent it? Would not the *Jews* take Care to have a sufficient Number, to secure against any Attempt of the Disciples? But if they were sleeping, how could they so confidently report that for a Truth, of which they knew nothing?

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BUT it is very manifest that our Saviour did lay great Stress on his rising from the Dead, and the *Jews* apprehended him to have done so. His Resurrection therefore, if it be Matter of Fact, must establish his Credit. The *GOD of Truth* could not authorize such *horrid Imposture*, as that of our Saviour must have been, had he not been that *very Person*, and sustained that *very Character*, to which he pretended, by raising him from the Dead; or even permitting him to rise, had it been in his own Power to rise, or that of any other Creature, to raise Him?

AND yet that he is risen, was made appear to all this Multitude, by what they saw poured forth by Him on his Disciples, and is testified by his Disciples the most proper and the most credible Witnesses in the Case. He was seen to many of them severally after his Resurrection, to *the Eleven* when together, to above *five Hundred at once*, and after many Conversations with them, was at last taken up to Heaven in their view. This they all confidently reported, witnessed to all Mankind, persisted in the Testimony to Death, and braved all manner of Dangers in maintaining the Truth of it. They could not be mistaken Them-

SERM. V.


 selves, in believing they had seen him, when they really had not. All could not have been deceived, if some few had been fanciful, and imagined they saw what they did not. And our Saviour gave them such Opportunity of intimate Converse, and not only seeing but handling Him too, that none could be deceived. And sure they must have been mad, under all their Discouragements, to assert a known Falshood, and face the World down in it, when they had no Prospect before them, but that of Shame, Reproach, Injury, Imprisonment, Torture, Exile and the most cruel Death. It is plain therefore that they must have been competent Witnesses, from the Knowledge they had of the Fact, and they must be credible Witnesses, because they could have no Temptation in the World to spread such a Lie, but were under some of the strongest Temptations that could be, to suppress what they avowed to be the Truth. But

II. *Secondly*, THESE miraculous Powers conferred on them, gave *uncontrollable Evidence to their Testimony*, and such as could not be withstood. It doth not necessarily follow indeed, supposing Christ to be raised from the Dead according to their Testimony, that these Powers must have been conferred on them, immediately by Himself. This could be known alone from their Report, and the Account given by them, both of his Office and Powers. But when we consider, that they had this miraculous Gift, in Consequence of a Promise made by him before, and that in these Words, ^b *He, viz. the Paraclete, shall glorify me, for he*

^b John xvi. 14.

shall receive of mine and shew it to you, we SERM. V. can't doubt but he Himself bestowed the Spirit in this Manner. But whether he gave out these Powers himself, or whatever he Himself was (which I will suppose at present to be unknown, these Gifts being intended to spread the Knowledge of him who was before unknown) yet was it manifest that some way or other these Powers must come from G O D. For whether they were utterly out of the Power of any Creature to bestow or no, it is, I think, very manifest that they are such as the wise and watchful Providence of G O D would not suffer to be conferred on any Men, and much less on such a great Body of Men, for the propagating Error and Imposture.

It is manifest none can bestow such Powers without his Permission. All Creatures being under his Control, and seeing he can't suffer them to be given out for establishing the Credit of Falshood and Imposture, it is plain that they must come from him, in the Case before us, either immediately, or by Power communicated to our Saviour. These miraculous Gifts must pass upon the World, for Divine Attestations to the Apostle's Testimony, as long as they were uncontrolled. And hence G O D is very justly said by the Apostle, to *bear Witness to their Doctrine by Signs, and Wonders, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost*. These were their Credentials and Vouchers for the Truth of their Testimony, that it was indeed Divine.

[†] Heb. ii. 4.

SERM. V.

So that they not only bore Witness, to their having seen Christ alive again, after he was crucified, but, according to his Promise, they had Power from Him, to speak Tongues readily which they had never learned, to work Miracles, and do Things so much out of the Course of Nature as had never been seen in the World before; and they continually professed, that they were indebted for all these Powers, to that *Jesus* who was crucified by the *Jews*, but ^k *constituted of GOD both Lord and Christ.*

AND would Men of their Character borrow the Name of GOD, to give Countenance to such enormous Falshood as this must be, were it indeed Falshood? Or if this be thought consistent with their Character, would GOD ^l *who cannot lie*, give so far into the Design, as to confirm it by miraculous Attestations; Or suffer it to be confirmed by such Attestations, without doing any thing to control the Evidence of them, and destroy their Credit? It cannot be. As the Apostles therefore here told the *Jews*, they might know assuredly, that that same *Jesus whom they had crucified, was made of GOD both Lord and Christ.*

IT remains now to make Improvement of this Subject. I have not Time to draw all the Inferences I might from such a Truth, I shall therefore content my self with suggesting some practical Advices. As

I. *First*, LET us hence be persuaded, to believe the Truth of our holy Religion. That our Saviour is indeed a Teacher come from GOD, and that every Thing delivered in his Word,

^k Heb. ix. 36.

^l Tit. i. 2.

either from his *own Mouth*, or by his inspired Messengers, is worthy of all Credit and Acceptation. We have in this Instance a very glorious and convincing Proof of his Exaltation, and the Power with which he is vested. **G O D** hath at once born Testimony to *Him*, and *his* Messengers, and *their* Message to the World, by *Signs, and Wonders, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost*.

T H E Y were sent out into all Nations, to proselyte them to the Christian Faith. And they were ready furnished with the Language of every Nation whither they went, and enabled to speak without having ever learned it, the *Spirit of G O D* giving them Utterance. And this was at once necessary for the Discharge of their Trust (for how much of their Time, must, otherwise, have been spent, in learning the Languages, which was much more usefully spent, in instructing the People.) And at the same time 'twas a standing Evidence of the Truth of their Pretensions. They acted, as they said, by a Divine Warrant and Commission. They preached one *Jesus*, who was crucified by the *Jews*, but raised from the Dead by the Power of **G O D**, and exalted to his right Hand, and they proved their *own* Commission, and *his* Resurrection and Exaltation, by those miraculous Gifts, which certainly were from Heaven, and which they every where declared were bestowed on them, by their glorified Lord and Master. Those who were Eye and Ear Witnesses to these Powers, could have no room to doubt the Truth, of what they reported or taught who were endued with them, when they saw it so miraculously confirmed. And why should not we embrace this Religion

†

with

SERM. V. with the most cordial Assent, and be thoroughly persuaded of its Truth and *Divine Original*?

THESE Matters of Fact were never called in Question by the most inveterate Enemies of our Religion. Nor was there any Room for it, had it been in their Thoughts. They were not Things done in a *Corner*, but upon the Theatre of the World; Not among *Confederates* and *Confidants* only, but in the Sight of all, in open Day-light, before Friends and Enemies: Not in *one Nation* only, but in all Nations, where-ever the first Preachers of the Gospel came. And when the Matters of Fact were not to be disproved or denied, but were admitted by the most hearty Enemies of Christianity, shall not we admit the Evidence of the Fact, and heartily believe what was thus miraculously attested? A Doctrine so worthy in all Respects to come from God, and to which He hath so manifestly set his Seal? Let us heartily embrace, and stedfastly adhere to, our holy Doctrine and Profession. But

II. *Secondly*, LET us put our Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and depend upon him, for all the Benefits he is to bestow as *Lord and Christ*. It is plain, from this Passage, that he deserves all Credit, and therefore surely all Confidence. He is exalted by the right Hand of GOD, of which He hath given Evidence by shedding forth the Gift of Tongues, and other miraculous Powers on his Ministers. He enabled them by his Spirit to speak Languages which they never learnt, and perform Operations that manifestly surpassed all the known Force of Nature, and surprized Mankind. This must at least infer, that he is greatly beloved of GOD, and hath great Power with Him, and

and Interest in him. Would he have been empowered to bestow such Gifts on Men, if his Undertaking had not been highly acceptable to GOD? And if the bestowing such Gifts is a plain Evidence of his having great Power with GOD, and Interest in him, and this again of his being acceptable to GOD in his great Undertakings, must he not be worthy of our highest Trust and Confidence? Especially when we consider *who* He is, even *the eternal Word made Flesh*, and *what* He is, even *Lord and Christ*, by Divine Appointment and Constitution. Let us therefore

I. *First, Put trust in him for the Pardon of our Sins, and Reconciliation to GOD.* It was certainly a principal Branch of his Undertaking, one great End of his coming into the World, and Manifestation in Flesh ^m *to make Reconciliation for the Sins of the People*, and that by offering Himself in Sacrifice. It is ⁿ *through his Blood that we have Redemption, even the Forgiveness of Sins.* ^o *He is set forth as a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood for the Forgiveness of Sins.* He first offered Himself in Sacrifice, and then went into the Holiest of all, ^p *to appear in GOD's Presence for us*, and plead the Merit of his Sacrifice, to obtain Pardon and eternal Salvation for us. Now it is plain that he has been accepted of GOD in this Undertaking, from the Authority and Power to which he is advanced, and the miraculous Gifts by him conferred on his Ministers. Nor is it any wonder when we consider *who* He was, and what the *eternal Compact* between

^m Heb. ii. 17.

ⁿ Eph. i. 7.

^o Rom. iii. 25.

^p Heb. ix. 24.

SERM. V. him and his Father, for the Redemption of
 Mankind.

AND is he not, for this Reason, worthy of our highest Trust and firmest Confidence? May we not hope for Justification through his Merits, and the Remission of all our Sins for his Sake? May we not commit our Cause to Him, and depend on his pleading it with Success? I mean whilst *our Reliance* on Him is such, as is enjoined by the Gospel. Surely in this way, we may through him be justified, and reconciled to GOD. Nothing can hinder but our *Unbelief* and *Impenitency*. Our rejecting his Grace, or refusing to part with our Sins for his sake. But if we are made truly willing to be saved by him from all our Iniquities, and give him the honour of our Salvation, we may depend upon him for Pardon. Nay, if we are truly willing to become Penitent, and put our selves for this Purpose into his Hands, we may trust him with the Lives of our Souls; for ^a *He is exalted of GOD to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance to Israel, and Remission of Sins.*

II. Secondly, LET us trust him also, for the *sanctifying Influences of his blessed Spirit*. As He had Power to send forth his Spirit on his Apostles for miraculous Operation, He hath also Power to shed it forth on all who believe in him, on every true Disciple of his, for the quickning them with spiritual Life, and their Sanctification. For this is a much higher End of his Undertaking than that. *Miraculous Powers* were only given out as Means, for the better attaining this End, and promoting

^a Acts v. 31.

true Holiness among Mankind. He had failed SERM. V. in a main Branch of his great Design, if he had not been entrusted with the Dispensation of the Spirit for this Purpose. For he was ^r *to purify a People to Himself zealous of good Works*, and ^f *save them from their Sins*, as well as redeem them from their Guilt. But without these Influences of his Spirit on the Minds of Men, the strongest Convictions of the Truth of what he taught, would not change their Hearts, and restore them to their Purity.

BUT, from his having Power to give the Spirit for miraculous Operation and Effects, it may be concluded that he could not want a Power to bestow it for sanctifying Influence. That as he had the Dispensation of the Spirit of Might and Power entrusted with him, he must also have the Dispensation of the Spirit of Grace and Holiness. The making Men holy, and restoring them to the Divine Likeness, being a principal End of his Office, to which the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost were, as one of the proper Means, to subserve.

WE may therefore with humble Boldness confide in Him, for all those Influences of his sanctifying Spirit, that are necessary to our spiritual Life and Growth, if we apply to Him by Faith, with unfeigned Consent of Soul through the Help of his Grace, to be his Disciples and Servants. What we cannot do of our selves, He will work in us, and do for us by his holy Spirit, and ^r *by his Strength we shall be enabled to do all Things*. He will be ^u *our Life*, and dwell in us by his holy Spirit, and enable

^r Tit. ii. 14.
^f Matth. i. 21.

^r Phil. iv. 13.
^u Col. iii. 4.

SERM. V. *US to * mortify the Deeds of the Body, that we may live. And y work in us both to will and do of his good Pleasure, whilst, with an Eye of Faith directed to Him, we endeavour to work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling. But*

III. *Lastly, LET us look to it, that we live and act as those who are thoroughly persuaded of the Truth of the Gospel, and heartily credit those Divine Attestations that have been given to it. The End of all religious Knowledge and Faith is Practice. We are but religious by halves at most, till the Religion we profess engages our Hearts, has the Command of our active Powers, and we are influenced by its Principles to a suitable Life and Conversation. Seeing therefore we have so * sure a Word of Prophecy, let us give heed to it. Seeing we have a Saviour so near and dear to G O D, so acceptable to Him, so able to plead our Cause, and heal our Maladies, let us make the proper Use of Him, and apply to Him as Lord and Christ, both for * Righteousness and Strength, for Pardon of Sin, and Power against it.*

AND let us be as much concerned to partake of his quickning and sanctifying Spirit, as the justifying Merit of his Obedience and Sufferings. To have his Spirit dwell in us, as to have his Righteousness reckoned to our Account, or imputed to us. Let us depend upon Him for Life and Salvation: Let us adhere constantly to Him. Let us follow him closely, and copy his excellent Example into our Lives and Conversations. Let us heartily believe,

* Rom. viii. 13.

y Phil. ii. 12.

* 2 Pet. i. 19.

* Esai. xlv. 24.

and profess the *Doctrines* he hath taught; be SERM. V.
obedient to the *Precepts* he hath given, attend
to the *Motives* he hath laid before us to urge
us to Duty, and yield to their Force, and en-
deavour by a *suitable Conversation* to recom-
mend his holy Religion to the *Esteem* and *good*
Opinion of Others, if we can't prevail with
them heartily to embrace it.

AND let those of us, in a particular Man-
ner, who have this Morning been *renewing our*
Covenant with him at his Table, *rejoice* in so
powerful an Advocate and Intercessor, *renew*
our Trust in him, and *resolve* by his Grace
more firmly than ever to adhere to him, to
hope in his Mercy, depend on his faithful Pro-
mises, obey his Commands, follow his Exam-
ple, maintain his Cause and Interests, and en-
deavour to make it appear that his Religion is
the Truth of G O D, by the mighty Power
which accompanies it in our Hearts, and is
shewn forth in our Lives and Conversations.
And let us persevere in this Course, in spite of
all Danger and Opposition, till we shall be re-
ceived into the *Joy of our LORD*, be with
him where he is, and behold his Glory, and tri-
umph in his Favour and Enjoyment for ever.

Which GOD of his infinite Mercy grant to
us all, for Christ Jesus sake, to whom be
Glory and Honour for ever. Amen.





Laying up Treasure in Heaven.

THREE
S E R M O N S

Preached in the *OLD JEWRY*,
1717.

MATTH. vi. 20.

*But lay up for your selves Treasures in
Heaven, where neither Moth nor Rust
doth corrupt, and where Thieves do not
break through and steal.*

SERM. VI.



THESE Words are Part of our
Saviour's Discourse on the *Mount*.
In which he hath been pleased to
give Us, the most plain and per-
fect Account of the Duties of
Religion, and explain and enforce
the *Law of Nature*, in those Particulars where-
in it had been through *Weakness* misunderstood,
or through *Wickedness* misinterpreted, by the
Jewish

Laying up Treasure in Heaven.

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Jewish Doctors. The whole Discourse is made SERM. VI. up of Precepts of Virtue and Religion, not in a way of *Argument* but *Aphorism*, not connected but independent, and thrown together in such Order as our Saviour saw good. Nor are we therefore to look for much Connexion in the Parts, nor look into the Context, for the Meaning of a particular Passage.

THE Words I have read are indeed introduced by the adversative Particle, which must refer us to somewhat just before said. And in the preceding Verse we shall find our Saviour cautioning his Disciples against *laying up Treasure for themselves on Earth*; because *Moth and Rust* may consume them, and *Thieves break in and carry them off*. But, since it is impossible, according to the present Constitution of human Nature (which is formed with a strong and invariable Bent towards Happiness in general) but a Man must have his Treasure somewhere; our Saviour in the Words of my Text informs them, that He did not mean, by this Caution, to dispossess them of all Treasure, but direct them to that which is the greatest, and indeed the only true Riches. He doth not persuade them to renounce all Happiness, and the Hopes of it, but directs them to seek it, where only the true Happiness of a reasonable Being is to be found, *viz.* In GOD the Fountain of Being and Goodness, and in that blessed Region, where He displays all his Glories, opens all his Stores of Love, and feasts his Saints with the most constant, full and satisfying Enjoyment of Himself for ever. This I take to be the meaning of the Text. In which we have

M

I. First,



I. *First, A Duty enjoined. Lay up for your selves Treasures, &c.*

II. *Secondly, REASONS urging to the Performance of it. In these Words, where neither Moth nor Rust can corrupt, &c.* Each of these shall be distinctly considered, and then the Whole improved.

I. *First, WE are to consider the Duty here enjoined.* Θησαυρίζετε δε υμῖν Θησαυροὺς ἐν οὐρανῷ. *Treasure up for you Treasures in Heaven.* By this Expression our Saviour doth not mean, that we should lay up any Treasure in Heaven, besides what is there already; As though we could make Addition to the Wealth of that happy State, as we may fill our Bags, and enlarge our Stores here on Earth. For Heaven is already as rich as it can be. Nor can any Addition be made to its Stores by our Contributions. The meaning is not that we should enrich Heaven, but that we should take all due Care to obtain and enjoy the Riches and Pleasures already provided there. The Treasure is laid up there already, the Duty incumbent on us, is to take care, that this Wealth be ours: That we may *now* have a Title to it, and *hereafter* become possessed of it. All Men will not have an Interest in this Treasure. * *Many will seek to enter in and shall not be able.* And many will not so much as seek to enter in, either from a total Ignorance, or a stupid Indolence, and Neglect of these Treasures. Nor will every one have (as it is reasonable to think) an equal Share in these Treasures, when yet each

may have an Interest in them, as great as the Capacity of his Mind will allow. SERM. VI.

BUT it is every Man's Concern to obtain these Treasures, to acquire a fair Title to them at present, and maintain it, and hereafter to get Possession of them, and derive eternal Satisfaction and Felicity from it. And this is the Duty here enjoined by our Saviour. What this Duty implies, comes now particularly to be considered. Two Things in the general are implied in it, viz.

I. *First, A fixed and relishing Persuasion, of the Reality and Excellency of these Treasures.*

II. *Secondly, A proportionate Value and Esteem for them.*

I shall consider each, and

I. LAYING up Treasure in Heaven implies, *A fixed and relishing Persuasion of the Reality and Excellency of the heavenly Treasure.* A *fixed Persuasion*, I say, in Opposition to what is fluttering and transient. A Persuasion that settles in the Heart, and dwells there: Not a flight neglected and flitting Thought, that may move the Mind *in Transitu*, and whilst it stays, but doth not abide long enough to affect it thoroughly. I add, *a relishing Persuasion*, in Opposition to what is merely visionary, and amuses the Mind without ever possessing and quickening it; like the fainter Representation of a Map, or Relation of an History, compared with the Notion of a Traveller, and the Idea which he hath formed on ocular Observation. Or rather like the Notion an indifferent Person takes in, from the Description of a Lover,

SERM. VI.

compared with the pleasing *Idea*, He himself forms of his best beloved. The former may think her amiable indeed, and have a faint unaffected Thought of her Beauties and Charms; but the latter relishes every Feature and Quality he describes, delights Himself with the Form impressed on his Mind, and feels his whole Soul moved and entertained, with the dear Remembrance of Her whom he loves.

It is not a slight Persuasion of the Things of another and a better World, not a transient and vanishing Thought of them, not a lifeless and insipid Apprehension, that I here intend; but what is fixed deep on the Mind, will stay in it, will penetrate through it, and rouse and engage it, and spread Life and Pleasure through the whole Soul. This must be laid as the Foundation. Such a Belief of what is said in the holy Scriptures concerning *this City of GOD*, is the first Stone in this Building. The very Ground-work of the Duty here enjoined. A Persuasion

I. *First*, OF the *Reality of heavenly Treasures*; that there is a future Life and a celestial State. That the Things spoken of them in the Scriptures, are the Truth of GOD, of Him ^b *who cannot lie*. That they are not *Fictions*, made only to delude us with false Hopes. And that the Notions formed of them in pious Minds, upon the Warrant of GOD's Word, are not the mere Effects of a working Fancy, or an heated Imagination. But that heavenly Treasures are real and not visionary, solid and substantial, and not airy Dreams.

^b Tit. i. 2.

Laying up Treasure in Heaven.

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THEY are spoken of in holy Scripture in SERM. VI.
 Terms expressive of the utmost Reality. ^c *Bags*
that wax not old, Treasure in Heaven that fail-
eth not. ^d *A good Foundation laid up in Store,*
against the Time to come, that we may lay hold
of eternal Life. ^e *The everlasting Habitations.*
^f *An Inheritance incorruptible.* ^g *An enduring*
Substance. ^h *A Crown of Glory that fadeth not*
away. Nay, ⁱ *an exceeding Weight of Glory*
 These Expressions certainly intimate to us, that
 the Riches and Happiness of Heaven, are very
 great Realities, Things truly existing and sub-
 stantial. These strong Terms do not stand for
 Dream and Fiction, for Fancy and fond Ima-
 gination, for Vanity and Air, but for Substance
 and Reality. Such certainly must that be
 which is described as an *Habitation*, an *Inheri-*
tance, a *Crown*, a *Substance*, nay, and an exceed-
ing Weight of Glory.

Now when we are required to lay up Treas-
 ure in Heaven, the first thing to be done, is
 to get a deep, and relishing Persuasion of this
 fixed in our Minds, viz. That there is such an
 heavenly Treasure to be had. Though it be
 out of the Ken of our fleshly *Eyes*, and be-
 yond the Grasp of our *Arms*, it is not out of
 the Prospect of our *Faith*, or the Reach of
 our *Hopes*. Though it be not present with Us,
 a Thing to be known by Experience, yet it
 is surely promised, may now be secured, and
 will hereafter be possessed by every persevering

^c Luke xii. 33.

^d 1 Tim. vi. 19.

^e Luke xvi. 9.

^f 1 Pet. i. 4.

^g Heb. x. 34.

^h 1 Pet. v. 4.

ⁱ 2 Cor. iv. 17.

Laying up Treasure in Heaven.

SERM. VI. Believer. And even the present Evidence of it by Faith, and Anticipation of it by Hope, will enlarge and elevate, and refine, and in some Measure cheer and satisfy the Soul. But there must be a Persuasion,

II. *Secondly, OF the Excellency, as well as Reality, of this heavenly Treasure.* That, there are not only Treasures to be had and enjoyed in a future World, but that these are very valuable and excellent. That they are Treasures of the greatest Worth. And that

I. *First, IN themselves.* These Treasures are spoken of in holy Scripture, in Terms plainly importing thus much. They are called ^k *eternal Life*. ^l *Everlasting Life*. A Crown ^m of *Glory*. ⁿ *Of Righteousness*. ^o *Of Life*. ^p *An House of GOD, a Building not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens*. ^q *A Kingdom*. ^r *An heavenly Kingdom*. ^s *An heavenly Country*. ^t *The heavenly Jerusalem*. To intimate that as *Jerusalem* of old was the Glory of this Earth, as being the City and Seat of GOD, where his Temple was erected, and He ^u *dwelt between the Cherubim*, so the heavenly State is much more properly the ^x *City of GOD*, where he *indeed dwells between the Cherubim*, and as much surpassing the heavenly *Jerusalem*, as Heaven is more vast, resplendent and glorious, than this Clod on which we tread.

^k Rom. vi. 22, 23.

^l John iii. 13, 36.

^m 1 Pet. v. 4.

ⁿ 2 Tim. iv. 7.

^o James i. 12.

^p 2 Cor. v. 1.

^q Luke xii. 32.

^r 2 Tim. iv. 18.

^s Heb. xi. 16.

^t Heb. xii. 22.

^u Psalm lxxx. 1.

^x Rev. iii. 12.

Laying up Treasure in Heaven.

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NAY, to sum up all Excellencies in one, it SERM. VI. is called ^y *Glory*, ^z *eternal Glory*. ^a *The Glory of GOD*, i. e. according to the *Hebrew Idiom*, (which expresses a Superlative by joining the Name of GOD to the Substantive.) *The very utmost Glory*. Its Meaning is farther explained, when the ^b *Glory of GOD* is said to lighten the *New Jerusalem*, so that it needs not the Light of Sun or Moon. This is lost in the much greater Blaze of Divine Splendor, the very Effulgence of GOD. There He who dwells between the Cherubim doth properly shine forth. And, if the Imagination may be heightened by any stronger Terms, the heavenly State is called the *Kingdom and Glory of GOD*, the ^c *Kingdom and Glory of Himself*, ἡ ἐαυτοῦ βασιλεία καὶ δόξα, his own Kingdom and Glory.

NOR only are these Treasures compared to the most pompous and magnificent Things on Earth, to set forth their Excellency, but they are represented under the most engaging and pleasurable Allusions that may be. They are called the ^d *Joy of our Lord*. ^e *Fulness of Joy*. For though *David* might use this Expression of the Divine Presence in the Tabernacle, it is much more emphatical and true as to his heavenly Presence; His Presence in the *New Jerusalem*. There only will the Pleasure be properly everlasting. And if now, when we see him not, ^f *We can, through Faith, rejoice in Him with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory*, what

^y Col. i. 27.

^z 1 Pet. v. 10.

^a Rom. v. 1.

^b Rev. xxi. 23.

^c 1 Thess. ii. 12.

^d Matth. xxv. 21, 23.

^e Psalm xvi. 11.

^f 1 Pet. i. 8.

Laying up Treasure in Heaven.

SERM. VI. will the Rapture be, when ^g *We shall see him Face to Face*, ^h *see Him as he is*? It is no wonder if, hereupon, the Apostle tells us, ⁱ *That when our Saviour's Glory shall be revealed, we shall be glad with exceeding Joy.* It is there indeed, that the People of GOD are made to ^k *drink of the River of his Pleasures.* For ^l *the Lamb shall feed them, and lead them to living Waters.*

AND is it any Wonder, the heavenly State should be represented as thus joyous, when in the immediate Effulgence of the Divine Glory, the happy Possessors shall ^m *behold Light*? For, ⁿ *if Light be sweet, and it is so pleasant for the Eyes to behold the Sun,* how delightful must it be, to see the *Sun of Righteousness* for ever shining forth, in a full Blaze of Glory, with Eyes made strong to bear the Sight, and to stay at it? It is not now to be imagined, how much living Pleasure this must diffuse through the whole Soul, and how much it will rejoice and ravish the Heart.

BUT now, when the holy Scriptures speak of the heavenly State and Bliss, in these Terms, and with Allusions to Things on Earth, of the greatest Worth and Excellency: When they represent it to us under the Notion of *Treasure*, of *Substance*; of an *Inheritance*, of a *Crown*, of a *Kingdom*, of *Glory*, &c. doth not this leave it out of Doubt, that it is a State of the greatest Dignity and Affluence? When they speak of it as a State of *Life and Pleasure*, in-

^g 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

^h 1 John iii. 2.

ⁱ 1 Pet. 11, 13.

^k Psalm xxxvi. 8.

^l Rev. vii. 16, 17.

^m Psalm xxxvi. 9. compared with Rev. xxii. 5.

ⁿ Eccl. xi. 7.

deed of *living Pleasure*, is not this to assure us SERM. VI. that it is a State of the greatest Happiness? And must not all this make out the Excellency of the heavenly Treasures? Must they not be Things of the greatest Worth in Themselves.

AND this would be made more fully to appear, did we enter into a more particular Consideration, of the Account in Scripture of this heavenly Felicity, from what Source it springs, and to what Height it rises. I have only Room for a general Sketch at present. We are assured then that

THE *Body* will be raised again ° *incorruptible and immortal*, and be for ever out of the reach of Death or Diseases. It will become glorious, like to the P *glorious Body of the exalted Redeemer*.

THE *Mind* will be perfectly purged there from all Dross and Corruption. Its Faculties will be improved to the uttermost. The Understanding will be clear and comprehensive. The Affections lively and refined. All its Powers will be made strong, and capable of perpetual Exercise, and even Extacy, without fainting, or being tired. All Inclination to forbidden Objects will be perfectly extinguished in it. All Clouds and Darkness will be removed from it. Its Judgment will be clear and certain. Its Elections and Aversions wise and regular. Its Appetites always rational and well-governed. GOD will by immediate Illustration shine in upon it, shew Himself to it in all his Glories, ravish it with the Sight, and kindle it into perfect Love; and by this Means diffuse celestial

° 1 Cor. xv. 53.

P Phil. iii. 21.

SERM. VI. Life and Vigor through the whole Soul, and
 fully ⁹ *transform it into his own Likeness.*

WHAT a Transport of Joy must be awakened in the Soul, upon the first Experience of such a Change! Such an Improvement in it for the better, considering what once it was, both in the common Mass of degenerate Mankind, and the Imperfections of the Christian State on Earth! What Pleasure and ineffable Satisfaction must flow into the Soul for ever, from Attention to its Improvements? When the happy Spirit feels it self pleased with the Sight of G O D, ravished with the Love of G O D, and dignified with his Likeness! Feels it self all healthy and vigorous, dwelling amidst Glories and Splendor ineffable, and yet having Faculties fully proportioned to the State, and able to bear this *Weight of Glory* for ever.

N O T to observe that G O D will always, with a Smile in his Countenance, and Complacency in his Heart, receive the Services and Songs of Praise, the Duty and Devotion, for ever issuing from a Sense of their great Privilege and Obligations. Nor only accept those Services, but reward them, with farther Testimonies of his Love and Favour, and fresh Endearments. Surely in such a State, where mutual Love between the glorious G O D, and his purified and perfected Creature is at the Height, Pleasure and Felicity must be in their utmost Exaltation. For

L O V E is an Affection of the Mind that hath Pleasure always annexed to it, I mean simply considered. It is indeed nothing but fixed Thought on any Object, attended with Pleasure.

⁹ 1 John iii. 2.

sure. The more intense therefore the Fire of SERM. VI. Love, provided it be kindled and kept in by sound and strong Reason, the more exalted must the Pleasure be. And can any Love be equally intense, with that of the glorified Soul to the glorious God, immediately shining in upon it? Or be supported with better Reasons? And will God, *who is Love* it self, receive the Offer of this Affection from them, glad their Hearts by this gracious Acceptance, and bless them with Returns of Love, such as will overflow the Soul, and wrap it up in Extacy, and must not they be living and breathing in the very Region and *Element of Love*? Such is the Glory and Happiness of the heavenly State. Sure the Treasures of Heaven are of the greatest Worth and Excellency in themselves. Every one who *lays up his Treasure in Heaven*, has full Persuasion of this. As also he hath

II. *Secondly*, OF their Excellency compared with all inferior Things. The Treasures on Earth. This our Saviour plainly hints to us, by the *Antithesis* or Opposition, between this and the preceding Clause. *Lay not up Treasure*, saith he, *on Earth, where Moth and Rust can corrupt, and Thieves break through and steal, but lay up Treasure in Heaven.* This is a plain Injunction to prefer the heavenly Treasures. It manifested *his* Sense of Things, and should fix *ours*. And plainly enough implies, that all who *lay up their Treasure in Heaven*, should have a Persuasion that heavenly Treasures do exceed earthly ones, and that not in a low Degree on-

SERM. VI. ly, but that they vastly surpass them, that there is no Comparison between them.

HEAVENLY Treasures are Things out of Sight, and though the Evidence of Faith be strong and certain, yet, considering our natural Prepossessions in Favour of sensible Things, we should never be prevailed upon, to let go visible and present Advantages, for the sake of such as are invisible and future, and at a far Distance, for any thing we know, from our World, if we had not a Persuasion, that they are much, very much to be preferred. That which is present, and sensible, has so much the Advantage, above what is future and remote from Sense, that without a Persuasion, that this last is so much more valuable than the former, as to make us abundant Compensation, should we renounce or give them up, this would never be done. Which yet is necessary, in some Circumstances, to secure the heavenly Treasures.

So that you see 'tis necessary, that we should have such a Preference of Esteem, for the heavenly Wealth and Riches, above all the Interests and Enjoyments of this World. Such a Persuasion must be laid as a necessary Foundation for the Performance of this Duty. Without it we shall never *lay hold of eternal Life*, but in manifold Instances should let go all hold of the heavenly Treasure and Inheritance. These are much to be preferred to the Things of the World for their Worth, as will appear in several Particulars that will come to be considered under our next general Head, for which Reason I enlarge not on them here; and they must appear in a manner infinitely preferable, to those who would secure these Treasures for them-

themselves. And now I proceed to observe that SERM. VI.
laying up Treasure in Heaven, implies

II. Secondly, A *Value* and *Esteem* for the heavenly Treasures, proportioned to the former Persuasion concerning them. I mean a fixed Persuasion of their *real Existence* and *surpassing Excellency*. We should accordingly prize them, and shew that we have such Belief concerning them, both by our Affections and Actions. For by Value and Esteem here, I mean what is practical: Not a lifeless and ineffectual Apprehension: But such as will quicken and stir the Mind, and move and influence the whole Man. The heavenly Treasures being apprehended by Him so passing excellent in themselves, so vastly superior to all the Treasures of this World, must engage his Esteem, must excite his Affections, must move all the Powers of his Mind, to exert themselves in vigorous Endeavours to obtain them.

IN short, He must act about these heavenly Treasures, as a Man, who puts a Value on earthly Treasures, is wont to do about them. The Treasure of *this Man* is on *Earth*, the Others is in Heaven. But the Affection of both for their chosen Treasure, their Concern about it, their diligent Endeavour to obtain it, and their Opposition to whatever stands in the Way, are much-what the same. Only it must be said to the Shame of Christians, that *the Children of this World are wiser in their Generation, than the Children of Light*. More zealous and diligent, more cunning and thoughtful, to procure and preserve *their* Treasure, than the Children of GOD are to possess and enjoy, that

^a Luke xvi. 8.

SERM. VI. *a better Part that will never be taken from them.*

BUT that I may open this Matter more fully, it will be proper to enter into Particulars, and shew you, some of the most remarkable Instances, in which this Value for the heavenly Treasures, must be manifested. And

I. *First*, It must be made appear, *by our Affection for them.* Not indeed, that it is possible for us, in our present State, to be so sensibly moved and affected, with heavenly and spiritual Things, as we may be with the Objects of Sense that lie round us. In the Exercise of our Affections about earthly Things, and the present Objects of Sense, there is such an Agitation of the Blood and Spirits, such sympathy and co-operation of the Body and Mind, as cannot be excited by spiritual Objects, which more immediately influence and operate upon the Mind. But, though we may not have the same sensible emotion of the Spirits and Mind, in the Exercise of our Affections about heavenly Things, as when they are employed about present and sensible Objects, and in this Sense our Affections for the former cannot be so warm, yet there may be a rational and spiritual Exercise about them, in which our Affections for them must exceed.

THIS sort of Affection is the most immediate Result of true Value and Esteem. Now heavenly Treasures appear to the Mind, as Things highly valuable in themselves, and valuable to it; and hereupon it sets an exceeding Price or Rate upon them. It determines thus within it self, "These are Things worth my

“ having, worth my getting and keeping at SERM. VI.
“ any Rate. They are Things that I am re-
“ solved to chuse as my Portion and Treasure,
“ which above all Things I desire upon the
“ surest Conviction of their Excellency, and
“ which I will endeavour to secure whatever
“ I miss.” So that though the Affections,
may not seem to be so lively and strong, in
their Exercise about them, as about sensible
Objects, yet the commanding Bent of the Mind
is towards them. They are chosen and preferred by it, before *any* other, indeed before *every* other Object.

It is by this Affection of our Minds we are naturally excited to Action, either to seek or to shun, to acquire or avoid, what is represented to our Thoughts as Good or Evil. The Appearance in one or other of these Forms, wakens the Affection of Love or the Passion of Hatred, gives either Inclination or Aversion; and that being fixed, determines the Mind to Action. First to enquire into the proper Measures by which to shun the Evil, or obtain the Good, and then to the pursuit of these Measures. And, as, in the present Case, heavenly Treasures, by Reason of their great Worth and Excellency, must appear to the Mind as the greatest Good, they should beget a strong Inclination, and determine it to a settled Choice of them. The Mind upon View must resolve, “ These Treasures, by the Grace
“ of God, must be mine, shall be mine. I
“ cannot, will not go without them. Here
“ all my Wishes and Hopes shall center.” And when once the Mind has made such a Determination, and is peremptory in it, this will move to farther Enquiries, how this chief Object

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SERM. VI.

ject of its Desires shall be obtained? And, the proper Means being once discovered, the Inclination to the End, will powerfully urge to the Use of them. And in this Order the Affections move the Man.

BUT the next Thing, in this Order of Operation, to our Esteem and Value for heavenly Treasures, is the Inclination towards them. As they are highest in our Esteem, they must be chief in our Desire. And if this Affection be not so lively, as our Desire after a sensible Object, yet in the rational Election and Bent of our Mind, they must be preferred. Our Hearts must say, and say with the highest Relish too, "These Things I value, and have chosen as my Treasure. To this Choice I do, and, by GOD's help, will adhere. I do not, cannot see any Reason to retract it, but the utmost Reason to abide by it for ever. My Inclinations therefore shall always be towards these heavenly Treasures. My principal and my prevailing Inclinations. This is my fixed, my unalterable Persuasion and Purpose, concerning them. I have yielded them the Possession of my Soul. This way my Heart is fully and irrevocably bent."

THIS is the Meaning of the Apostle's Desire to ^x *depart, and be with Christ*. To the same Purpose in another Place, he speaks of Christians, in general, as ^y *willing rather to be absent from the Body, and present with the LORD*; and elsewhere as ^z *rejoicing in the Hope of the Glory of GOD*. Even with such a Joy, as is more than a Balance against all the Sufferings of the present Life, and will render

^x Phil. i. 23.^y 2 Cor. v. 8.^z Rom. v. 2.

them very easy and tolerable. The ^a *Sufferings* of the present Life not being worthy to be compared with our expected Joy. For we wait for the *Manifestation of the Sons of GOD*. And what that is, another Apostle tells us, ^b *Beloved, now are we the Sons of GOD, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be. But we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.* We shall see him in his Glory, and look our selves into his full Resemblance. Love therefore breathing after heavenly Treasures in strong Inclination and earnest Desire, and looking for them with delightful Hope, is the distinguishing Affection of the real Christian. And it is the natural Indication of a Value and Esteem for them, founded on Persuasion of their Excellency and intrinsic Worth: especially when this Inclination and Hope, are accompanied with irrevocable Election of them as the Man's own Treasure, which with GOD's Leave and Help he will procure, and cannot be without it. But,

II. *Secondly*, OUR Value for heavenly Treasures must be manifested, by our *Concern to become possessed of them*. That which is the Man's Treasure will be much in his serious Thoughts. If therefore we highly value celestial Happiness; if we are heartily affected to it, and desirous of it; if this be the Treasure we have chosen for our selves, and would upon any Terms procure and possess, it will be our most serious Concern that we may. It will be the Subject of our serious Thought and Enquiry, how we may obtain and enjoy it. The Man, who hath made Choice of this as his Treasure, will act,

^a Rom. viii. 18.

^b 1 John iii. 2.

SERM. VI. as other Men do, who may make Choice of somewhat else, under the same Notion.

OBSERVE the Behaviour of a Man, who makes worldly Wealth, a large Estate on Earth, the Treasure on which he sets his Heart. With how much solicitous and painful Thought, with what Application and Intention will he enquire and project for the prosecuting his Purpose, and obtaining his End? Look at the *Ambitious*: With how much Earnestness and Attention, doth he bend his Thoughts, to the acquiring Dignity and Honour? How seriously doth he plod and project to gain this Point, and shine in a distinguished Post, and make a Figure among his Fellow-Worms. Nay, the *Wretch*, who is a Slave to Lust, though of all Men he seems least fitted for serious Thought, yet often quite fatigues his Mind, in inventing *new* Methods of sensual Satisfaction, or contriving new Measures to repeat, and keep up the Relish of *the old*.

AND thus also will it be, with every one who values, as he ought, celestial Bliss. The Bent of his Mind will be towards it. If he be covetous of heavenly Riches, or if ambitious of celestial Honours, or thirst indeed for heavenly Pleasures, *the c Joys at GOD's right Hand* which last for ever, sure 'twill be his sincere, his great Concern to gratify these Inclinations, and possess the Wealth, the Dignities and Joys which have Possession of his Heart. About this he will certainly employ his Thoughts, and that with Seriousness and deep Concern. He will not seem indifferent whether he be happy for ever or no, but shew

Himself intent on heavenly Bliss, and very thoughtful how he may obtain it. SERM. VI.

NOR, indeed, that heavenly Things will so entirely engage and occupy a Believer's Thoughts, as wholly to call them off from all inferior Things. This, in the present State of human Nature, is impossible. Nor would it consist altogether with his Duty, to have heavenly Things so much fill up his Mind, as earthly Things do the Minds of those who seek their Treasure here. For though the Christian ^d *be not of this World*, he is *in it*. He hath a worldly Business to attend, which tho' it be inferior much to his everlasting Concern, and appear so to Him; yet must it, ordinarily, take up the greatest Part both of his Time and Thoughts. But the Bent of his Heart will be towards Heaven. He will be *most* solicitous to obtain and enjoy, the *chief* Objects of his Affection and Hopes. And so, though heavenly Things may not possess the *most* of his Thoughts, they will have Possession of his *most serious* ones. He will not, with equal Intention and Concern of Mind, study and project how to be rich, or great or honourable in the World, as how to be in Favour with GOD, and ^e *made meet for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*. This last is indeed his chief Concern, the very Scope and Business of his Life.

THIS is the plain Import of that apostolical Injunction, ^f *If ye be risen with Christ, seek the Things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the Right-hand of the Father. Set your Affections on Things above, not on Things on the*

^d John xv. 19.

^e Col. i. 13.

^f Col. iii. 1, 2.

Laying up Treasure in Heaven.

SERM. VI. *Earth, or g mind them*: Let them be much in your Thoughts. Or *be careful about them*: Let them be your principal Care. Mind them, be concerned for them, and seek them as those who have such a Mind and Concern. The Intention of the Mind on this Inheritance, is elsewhere described by the same Apostle, when he speaks of ^h *forgetting the Things which are behind, and reaching out to the Things which are before*, stretching forward to seize them. And, as he acted thus Himself, he advised also the *Philippians* to ⁱ *be thus minded*. Let this, as if he had said, be the principal Care and Business of Life, to secure the Bliss of a future Life. Let this engage and employ your most serious Thoughts. Whatever you miss, be concerned, ^k *not to come short, not to seem to come short of the everlasting Rest, and Recompence of Reward*. Again,

III. *Thirdly*, OUR Value for heavenly Treasures must be manifested, *by the Diligence of our Endeavours to obtain them*. Whatever a Man heartily loves, he will endeavour to possess and enjoy. Whatever a Man *principally* loves, loves better than *any* other Thing, better than *all other* Things put together, he will use his utmost Endeavours to possess. He will not, in this Case, satisfy himself with lazy and ineffectual Wishes. The powerful Affection will rouse the whole Man. It will excite the most serious Concern. This will be manifested by serious Enquiry about the proper Ways and Means, by which to reach the desired End, and be possessed of what the Soul superlatively

^g *providere, cogitare, curare.*

^h Phil. iii. 14.

ⁱ Verse 15.

^k Heb. iv. 1.

loves. And these being discovered, the very SERM. VI. same Impulse that puts upon the Enquiry, will stir up to the diligent and persevering Use of them. Those that appear proper to him, that he knows, or is certainly informed, will help him to attain his End, he will apply to this Purpose, and use with all Earnestness and Industry.

TAKE the *Ambitious* for an Instance. If he knows, that, to attain his Ends, he must flatter those above Him, and humour those below him; how will he fawn and cringe to the former, how will he stoop to the Tastes and Inclinations of the latter? How will he balk his Pride, and hold in his Passions and Resentments, stoop to the meanest Compliances, and swallow those Affronts that are most hardly to be digested? And how constant and unwearied is he in his Applications, till he has obtained his End.

AND can it be doubted, whether the like will be the Effect of an holy Ambition for Heaven, at least in some good Degree? Will not the Man who hath here laid up his Treasure, and chosen to be happy and blest, be busy and industrious in obtaining his chosen Bliss? Will he not apply himself to the Use of the proper Means, and pursue his Design with unwearied Diligence? Especially when Means that will infallibly reach the End, are open to View? Which is the Case here: **GOD** having, by the *Gospel of his Son*, made known to us the sure Way to everlasting Rest. We need be at no Loss nor Uncertainty about this Matter. ¹ *The LORD hath shewn us what is good,*

¹ Mic. vi. 8.

Laying up Treasure in Heaven.

SERM. VI. *and what he doth require at our Hands, viz.*

That we should repent of all our past Sins;
That we should honour our Redeemer, by
Faith in Him, and Dependance on Him, for
Pardon, Grace, and the Favour of G O D :
That by Him we should return to G O D, should
renounce all our Idols, and detest and forsake
all our Sins : Should chuse G O D as our G O D
and Portion, and Heaven as our Home and
Happinefs : Should be diligent in reading the
Word of G O D, in praying to Him for his
needful Grace, and in meditating on divine and
heavenly Things : Should be watchful against
Temptation, constant and close in our Atten-
dance on the Means of Grace, not merely bo-
dily Attendance, but so as to have our Souls
and Hearts engaged. In a Word, he has told
us plainly that we should ^m *lay a Foundation in
Repentance from dead Works, and Faith towards
G O D.* And this being done, ⁿ *We should
live by the Faith of the Son of G O D, and of
o heavenly Things, should have p our Conversa-
tion in Heaven. Should q cleanse our selves from
all Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, and be per-
fecting Holiness in the Fear of G O D. Should
r as Pilgrims and Strangers on Earth abstain from
fleshly Lusts that war against the Soul. And
s purify our selves as the G O D and Saviour,
whom we hope to see and resemble in Heaven,
is pure.*

THESE are, by divine Appointment, the
necessary Preparatives for heavenly Bliss. The

^m Heb. vi. 1.

ⁿ Gal. ii. 20.

^o Heb. x. 30.

^p Phil. iii. 20.

^q 2 Cor. vii. 1.

^r 1 Pet. ii. 11.

^s 1 John iii. 1.

Means to be used on our Part, if we would SERM. VI. acquire the heavenly Treasures. In this Matter G O D has spoken his Mind so plainly, that *He who runs may read.*

IF therefore we value these Treasures as we ought, we shall be found diligent in the Use of these Means. We shall be industrious and unwearied in their Use. We shall, in a Sense, *give our selves wholly to these Things*, and that not *pro tempore*, and on certain Occasions only, but throughout the Course of our Lives. We shall ^t *hold out to the End*, in this Diligence, knowing that without it we cannot *be saved*. This is what the Apostle calls, if I mistake not, ^u *holding fast the Confidence and rejoicing of Hope firm to the End*, and ^x *holding the beginning of our Confidence stedfast to the End*. That is, We must so retain our heavenly Hopes, so animate and hearten our selves by them, that we may, not only at some particular Seasons, but in our general Conduct, and to the very End of our Lives, be diligent in our great Business; and be earnest, lively, constant and persevering in the Pursuit of that Bliss, we have in View.

AND very great Reason is there for it. Because we must conquer and ^y *finish our Course*, before we can obtain *the Crown*. And after we have made the greatest Advances towards Perfection possible in this Life, how much shall we come short of the consummate Holiness of the heavenly State? How large a Field will be still open for our Improvement?

^t Matth. xxiv. 13.

^u Heb. iii. 6.

^x Verse 14.

^y 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

SERM. VI.

AND indeed our Diligence in Pursuit of heavenly Treasures should grow, in Proportion to our Growth in Grace, and our increasing Meekness for *the Inheritance of Saints in Light*. Our Motions should be the more strong and swift, the nearer we are to our central Rest and Settlement. But it is out of Doubt, that whoever hath a due Value for the heavenly Treasures and Inheritance, will diligently use all the known Means, both external and internal, that he may possess and enjoy them. Again,

IV. *Fourthly*, OUR Value for heavenly Treasures will be manifested, by *an hearty and zealous Opposition to whatever stands in our Way*. When a Man's Heart is set on any Thing as a Treasure, this uses to be his Temper and Conduct. Though the Pursuit of it be attended with Difficulties, though Obstacles stand in his Way, and he must expect and encounter Opposition, he doth not give over. The Prospect before him inspires with Resolution and Courage. He is fixed in his Purpose, nor will he shrink at the Difficulties which attend the Prosecution of it. Though he must labour hard, and fight manfully, he keeps on till he hath reached the Object of his Desires, and possesses the Treasure on which he had set his Heart.

AND thus will every one act, who puts a due Value on the heavenly Treasures. Many Difficulties he will indeed meet with in his Way. Much Fatigue and Hardship must be endured. Many Enemies will oppose his Design. His Mind must be much exercised in serious Thought and continual Vigilancy. Self must be denied. Corruptions must be mortified. Passions must be mastered, and Appetites subdued.

subdued. The World must be conquered. The *Roaring Lion* must be withstood. His Artifices evaded with Skill and Caution, his Assaults repelled with Resolution and Firmness. Much must be done, and much must be suffered, before he can possess the Treasure, which he hath in Pursuit. And that He may not come short of it, he must be ^a *stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the Work of the LORD.*

FOR this Reason the Life of a Christian is in holy Scripture represented *sometimes* as a ^a *Race*, *sometimes* as a ^b *Warfare*, where the utmost Vigour must be exerted, the most formidable Dangers must be faced, the fiercest Enemies are to be encountered and overcome. And without such Combating and Conquest, no Crown of Life or Glory can be obtained. Nor can a due Value be manifested for the incorruptible Inheritance, and the Throne to which the victorious Saint shall be advanced, if he shrinks from the Warfare; and because of the Difficulties and Dangers in the Way, gives over his Pursuit, or proceeds in it without Life and Spirit. If Men here below will charge through any Difficulties, and expose themselves to any Hardships or Hazards, to obtain a corruptible Crown; surely He who hath an ^c *incorruptible Crown in View*, ^d *one that fadeth not away*, should push through the fiercest Enemies, and the most hazardous Trials and Temptations. He will do so, if he sets a due Value on the *Recompence of Reward*. He will hearten Himself for the Encounter. He will watch

^a 1 Cor. xv. 58.

^b Heb. xii. 1.

^c 1 Cor. ix. 7.

^e Verse 25.

^d 1 Pet. v. 1.

SERM. VI. that he may not be surprized. He will resist that he may not be foiled. He will argue himself out of his Fears, by attending, to the powerful Succours he may expect from the *Captain* of his Salvation, and the glorious Issues of a successful War against Sin, and the Powers of Darkness. In a Word, He will endeavour to *be faithful to the Death, that he may obtain the Crown of Life; and make Resistance unto Blood, striving against Sin.* Thus will every one act, who indeed lays up his Treasure in Heaven. Again,

V. *Fifthly*, OUR Value for heavenly Treasures must be manifested, by frequent and pleasing Thoughts of them. Whatever is a Man's Treasure, is certainly very much in his Mind, *Where the Treasure is, the Heart will also be.* This is obvious in common Experience, if a Man's Heart be set on rising in the World, on an high Station, or an honourable Office, as this is the Object of his Wishes and Hopes, so will it be much the Subject of his pleasing Thoughts. How will his Soul stretch towards it? And if there be any the least Prospect of succeeding in his Attempt, with what Pleasure will he go over, in his Mind, all the recommending Circumstances of such a Post? How dazzling does he represent it in his own Imagination, and by the gaudy Colouring he lays upon it, how does he enflame his Desires? How apt is he to anticipate Possession by his flattering Hopes? Nay, to grasp at much more in forward Expectation, than he will ever find when he comes to possess what he expected?

° Rev. ii. 10.

† Heb. xii. 3.

‡ Verse 34.

THIS indeed, is never like to be the Case of One whose Heart is set on heavenly Treasures. It is not possible that our Imagination at present, should stretch to the immense Compass of the Saint's Inheritance. ^h *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor has it entred into the Heart of Man to conceive, what G O D hath laid up in Store for them that love Him.* It is a Treasure far surpassing the present Force of human Thought. It is only fully to be valued by the happy Possessor. Nor is there any Danger, that his Possessions should ever shame his preceding Hopes. The ⁱ *Hope* of a Christian will never *make him ashamed.* Nay, when he is actually enjoying heavenly Bliss, with his Capacities improved to the uttermost, he will justify his most earnest Expectations, and approve his former highest Thoughts and Hopes of this Felicity.

AND when this is the true State of Things, and known to be so, by every one who *lays up his Treasures in Heaven*, will he not, must he not often let loose his Thoughts on such a Subject, and entertain Himself with a Survey of the *promised Land*? Must he not often contemplate, and go over, in his Mind so vast an Happiness? Happiness durable as Eternity, and large as the utmost Compass of his Thoughts, not only now when he ^k *thinks as a Child*, but when he shall have *put away his childish Things*, and be grown up to ^l *the full Measure of the Stature of a perfect Man* in Christ? When he has such Assurance that his Hopes will not deceive him, and leave him

^h 1 Cor. ii. 9.

ⁱ Rom. v. 5.

^k 1 Cor. xiii. 11.

^l Eph. iv. 13.

SERM. VI. Shadows for Substance; but on the other hand, that his Possessions shall prodigiously exceed his present Thoughts and Hopes, can he forbear the frequent turning his Mind this way, and taking a View of his expected Rest? When his Hopes are so much more towering, and yet more sure than those of ambitious Men on Earth, shall they anticipate their Hopes, grasp their Bliss beforehand, and lose themselves amidst their imaginary Scenes of Happiness, and shall not he turn his Eyes towards Heaven, nor think with any Pleasure or Frequency of his expected Advancement and Glory? How unnatural were this?

WILL the Worldling please himself, with the Contemplation of his Bags and Stores, his Houses and Lands, the Wealth he has in Possession, and what he has in mere Prospect also? Will he frequently run over these Things in his Mind, and let his Soul expatiate, and wanton indeed among these Delights? And is it not as natural for a Man, whose *Treasure is in Heaven*, to give the Reins to his Thoughts, and let them range beyond the Borders of Time, leave Earth and earthly Things behind them far, and pierce into the *holiest of all*, there to behold the Glories of the upper World, and by very gustful Anticipations of these expected Glories, feast and regale his Soul whilst here on Earth? Bring down the Food of Angels to the Wilderness, and facilitate and sweeten his Passage through *this* World, by the Hopes of a *better*? What less than this can the Apostle mean, when he tells us of Himself and other Believers in his Time; ^m *That they looked not*

at the Things which are seen, but at the Things SERM. VI. which are not seen; Things that are seen being only Temporal, when Things not seen are Eternal?

This certainly implies such a firm Belief and Prospect of Things eternal and invifible, of the Happinefs and Glory of the unseen World (for of this the Apostle is to be understood) as will fometimes at leaft, and often too, call off the Mind from vifible and tranfitory Things, and make it forget the Body and the World; and blefs it felf on the Prospect before it, and engage it in the pleafing Contemplation, of the immense and ineffable Stores, laid up for thofe who love GOD, in his own heavenly Prefence. And,

VI. Finally, OUR Value for heavenly Treafures muft be manifested, by our Indifferency towards other Things. This is ever the Cafe where a Man's Heart is fet on any Thing as his Treafure. His Regard to this Object will in a manner fwallow him up, and make him neglect all other Things. Thus He who chufes Wealth, as his Treafure, and makes Mammon his GOD, will neglect and defpife the fenfual Pleafures of the Wanton and Voluptuary. He will break his Sleep. He'll mifs his Meals. He'll wear out his Body, and wafte his Flefh in Watchings, Faftings, and Drudgery, that he may cram his Coffers, or enlarge his Eftate.

ON the other hand the *Sensualift*, who makes a GOD of his Belly, and relifhes no Enjoyments but what are grofs and brutifh, will defpife that Wealth which is the Idol of the *Mammonift*, and lavifh away, in the moft heedlefs and profufe Manner, the Stores which his Anceftors, perhaps, wore themfelves out to collect and hoard up for Him. He will fwallow Houfes
and

SERM. VI. and Lands at a costly Draught, melt down his Substance to humour his Appetite, and even waste his Flesh to feed and pamper his Lust.

WHILST the *Ambitious*, who can see no Charms but in pompous Titles, high Stations and Offices of Honour and Power, can neglect sensual Delights, despise Wealth any farther than it may be made to subserve his ambitious Purposes and Aims, but will endure no balk of his aspiring Expectations, but pushes his Point at all Adventures, and hazards all his Wealth and Possessions, and many Times expends them, to acquire an empty Title, or a useless Post of Honour.

AND will not the Man, whose Heart is set on the heavenly Treasures, act after the same rate? As the Glories of Heaven, in his most just Esteem, out-shine by far all the Enjoyments of this World; so the Value he puts upon them will sink his Esteem of other Things. They will appear less valuable upon Comparison to Him, and will be less regarded by Him. All the Enjoyments of this World will sink in Proportion to the Value he sets on heavenly Treasures. His Value for these will rise, as his Acquaintance with them grows. The more therefore a Man understands and relishes the Happiness of a future Life, the more tasteless will the Fruitions of Time be to him; the more regardless will he be of earthly Interests and Possessions. Two or three Particulars wherein this Indifferency to other Things must manifest a Value of heavenly Treasures, will be fitly touched upon. But this must be done in my next Discourse.



*The Reasonableness of laying up Treas-
ure in Heaven represented.*

The second

S E R M O N

On *MATTHEW* iv. 20.

M A T T H. vi. 20.

*But lay up for your selves Treasures in
Heaven, where neither Moth nor Rust
doth corrupt, and where Thieves do not
break through and steal.*



N Discoursing from these Words, I SERM. VII.
proposed,

I. T o explain the Advice here
given, by shewing what it is, *to lay
up Treasure in Heaven.*

II. T o consider the Force of the Reasons
here given, for complying with this Advice ;
and

SERM. VII. and then, to make Improvement. I have not
 yet done with the

I. *First*, UNDER which I told you the Advice chiefly implies two Things.

I. *First*, THAT we should have a fixed and relishing Persuasion, that there are such Things as Treasures in Heaven, and that they are the most excellent.

II. *Secondly*, THAT we should have a proportionate Value and Esteem for them. And this Value and Esteem, as I shewed you, must be made appear,

I. *First*, BY our Affection and Inclination towards them.

II. *Secondly*, BY our Concern to become possessed of them.

III. *Thirdly*, BY the Diligence of our Endeavours to obtain them.

IV. *Fourthly*, BY our hearty and zealous Opposition to whatever stands in our Way to their Possession.

V. *Fifthly*, BY frequent and pleasing Thoughts of them.

VI. *Lastly*, BY a due Indifferency for all other Things. This is the Head I am still upon, and am now to mention some Particulars wherein this Indifferency ought to appear. As,

I. *First*, THE more truly a Man values heavenly Treasures, the less relishing will present Enjoyments be to him. Not but a Man who lays up his Treasure in Heaven may taste the Brook, in his way to a Land flowing with Milk and Honey. GOD hath not denied us a sober
 Delight

Delight in earthly Comforts, nor with-held us from any Pleasures by the way, consistent with Reason and Duty, when he has required us to prefer and pursue, *the Pleasures in his Presence for evermore.* Yet earthly Enjoyments to a Man whose Heart is set on the heavenly Treasures, are in a manner insipid, and have lost their Relish. They are fit to gratify a sensual Appetite, but they suit not the Taste of a reasonable Mind, refined and rectified by the Spirit of God, disgusted at Sin, and made capable of relishing divine and spiritual Delights. Such a Mind finds more inward and rational Satisfaction, in an hour's Converse with God, and Contemplation of celestial Treasures, than in an Age spent in the frothy or fulsome Pleasures of Sin. ^a *One Day in thy Courts, saith the Psalmist, is better than a Thousand. I had rather keep the Door of thine House, than dwell in the Tents of Wickedness.* When other Men are crying out, ^b *Who will shew us any Good?* the Language of his Heart is, *Lord, lift up thou the Light of thy Countenance on me.* This will put more Joy and Gladness into mine Heart, than others feel on the Increase of their Corn, or Wine, or Oil.

AND indeed amidst the most plentiful Possessions of this present Life, this Man doth not derive his principal Satisfaction from his outward Enjoyments, but from his Acquaintance with God, and his Prospect of celestial Glory. By an Act of strong Faith and lively Hope, he fetches down to Earth, the Pleasures and the Joys of Heaven. This gives such an Air

^a Psalm lxxxiv. 10.

Psalm iv. 6, 7.

SERM. VII.  to his Countenance, and such Chearfulness to his Heart, as can't be derived from any earthly Possessions or Enjoyments. It is the Expectation of being e're long made *equal to the Angels*, a Member of the *general Assembly and Church of the First-born*, and a Courtier of the *King of Glory*, that refreshes and raises his Heart. The Hope of heavenly Perfection is the *chief Fund and Fuel* of his present Pleasure.

FOR this he can easily resign all the Delights of Life, that are dearest and sweetest to the sensual Mind, and say with the highest relish, *Quam suave est istis suavitatibus carere?* *how sweet is it to give up, and go without those Satisfaction?* He can disdain and abhor all forbidden Pleasures. He can decline and neglect, he can give up and renounce, all present Interests, that are inconsistent with his Duty. He can despise and trample upon the greatest and most glittering Honours of this World, that can't be had or held with *a good Conscience*.

FOR this He can overlook and forget what Others idolize, and frequently withdraw from all the gay and tempting Scenes, that are spread round him here on Earth, that he may regale his Thoughts, and delight his Heart with the Prospects of Faith, and the real and substantial Glories and Pleasures, of the invisible World. And the clearer his Views, and the stronger his Persuasions are, of these heavenly Treasures, the more do the Glories of this World fade away, the more diminutive do all Things in it look, and the less doth he value and regard them. What little trifling Things, what Shadows and Vanities, do all the Honours and Pleasures, all the Interests and Possessions of this World appear, to an Eye of Faith, to
which

which all the Treasures of Heaven stand open? SERII. VII.
How insipid and disrelishing are they, to a Soul rejoiced, delighted, transported with the lively Hopes of all this Treasure, and snatch'd away to the very Presence and Bosom of GOD? But,

II. *Secondly*, THE more a Man values heavenly Treasures, the more easily can he part with other Things, when they are secure. Whether they are taken away by the immediate Hand of GOD, for the Punishment of his Sins, or the Trial of his Graces, or rent away by the violent Hands of wicked Men through divine Permission; in such Cases, the Man whose Treasure is in Heaven, sits down contented. Many times he is more than contented. He can rejoice in these Losses. Thus the Christian Hebrews, ^b took the spoiling of their Goods joyfully, knowing in themselves, that they had in Heaven, a better and a more induring Substance. By the Influence of this Principle, Moses is said to have ^c esteem'd the Reproach of Christ, greater Riches than the Treasures in Egypt. The Prospect of the eternal *Recompence of Reward*, made him prefer the poor and wretched State of the *Israelites*, to all the Pleasures of a Court, to all his Pretensions to the *Egyptian Crown*.

How dead must he be to all the Charms of Sense and Fancy, who could thus disclaim Relation to *Pharaoh's Daughter*, and renounce all his present Honours, and Wealth and Pleasures, and all his future Expectations? And whence all this Indifferency? Whence was it, that the Pleasures of a Court, and the Splen-

^b Heb. x. 34.

^c Heb. xi. 26.

SERM. VII. dor of a Crown, became such tasteless Things? How was he determined to prefer Poverty and Oppression, the most opprobrious Language, and the most injurious Treatment, to Ease and Plenty, and Honour and Pleasure? Why, he *had Respect to the Recompence of the Reward.* This was more than a Balance to all his Sufferings and Losses thrown together.

AND whoever has the same Esteem of heavenly Treasure, will shew like Indifference with *Moses* to inferior Things. The most tempting of them all in the Account of a Worldling, whether he be fir'd with Ambition, charm'd with the Love of Wealth, or enchanted with Pleasure, stand as Cyphers with *Him*, when they would come in Competition with his future Interests. Rather than *make Shipwreck of Faith* and a good Conscience, or do any thing that may forfeit his Title to the heavenly Inheritance, or destroy his Hopes of it; he will give up all the Pleasures and Possessions of Time. They are not worth holding upon these Terms. And when he hath done thus, he will look back on what he has done with hearty Content, with secret Pleasure, and Self-Appause. Just as in a Conflagration ashore, or a Storm at Sea, a Man will abandon his Lumber to secure his Jewels, and be pleased, when he comes in cold Blood to review what he has done, that he acted so wise a Part, and secured what he most valued, though at the Cost of his other Possessions.

THUS is Indifferency to the Things of the World to be made appear; thus will it be made appear, by the Man whose Treasure is in Heaven, when parting with them is the *Matter of his Choice*; when he is at his Option, whether

ther he will give up his present Possessions or SERM. VII.
his future Hopes, which is always the Case,
when he cannot keep his Possessions and a good
Conscience too.

AND the like Indifferency is to be shewn
when GOD is pleased, without putting it to
his Choice, either to remove or withhold
any of the Comforts or Enjoyments of Life.
You know it is said, that *he hath chosen*
the Poor of this World, rich in Faith, and
Heirs of the Kingdom. And may not they con-
tentedly want the good Things of this Life, at
the Pleasure of their heavenly Father, for
whom he has designed so glorious an Inheri-
tance hereafter? Will not this be the Case,
where Persons indeed put a due Value on hea-
venly Treasures, and remember that GOD in
his wise Providence is taking the best Mea-
sures, to fit and prepare his People for the Glo-
ry designed them. Can he, who loved Sinners
and Enemies at such a Rate, as to send his on-
ly begotten Son into the World to die for
them; He who loved Sinners, made Saints and
reconciled to him in Christ, at such a Rate as
to entitle them to the heavenly Kingdom and
Treasures; yet deny them any thing by the way,
that is truly good for them? Will he bestow
Grace and Glory on them, and yet withhold any
thing, of an inferior Nature, that *is truly good*
for them? It is a most unreasonable Thought.
And if it be his Pleasure to take from us what
once we had of Worldly Enjoyments, or re-
fuse to us what others have, shall we repine or
be uneasy? If we must have severer Exercises

James ii. 5.

Psal. lxxxiv. 11.

than others, in our Way to everlasting Rest, doth not our Heavenly Father know what is needful for us, and will not heavenly Treasures make Amends, and full Amends for all?

Yes, the Man who has laid up his Treasure in Heaven, will be ready, in such a Case, to say within himself; “ Since I have such a Prospect open; as I will not despise any of the Comforts of Life, but will *bleſs my good GOD*, when he beſtows them, neither will I overrate them, and therefore when *He takes away*, I will bleſs him ſtill. If he himſelf will be my Portion; if he will not ſhut me out of his heavenly Preſence and Kingdom, it is enough. Indeed, to be deſtitute, and to deſpair of his Favour, is Death. The Thought of parting with heavenly Treasures goes to my very Heart. But ſince he is pleaſed to leave me Himſelf and my glorious heavenly Hopes, though he ſhould deny me, or take away from me the good Things of Life, *His Will be done*. It is his Pleaſure I ſhould be without them, and I will ſincerely endeavour to make what is his Pleaſure truly mine. At leaſt, though I can’t find a Pleaſure in Poverty and Pain, I will rejoice in GOD, and the Hopes of my future Inheritance; and by the Joy of my Heart, and the Chearfulneſs of my Countenance, endeavour to make it appear, that a Spring of Joy is open to me, which is ſealed up from the World, and that I can be happy in the Lack of thoſe Things, which other Men make their whole Felicity.” Thus will the Man who values heavenly Treasures argue with himſelf, and to this Temper will he by hearty Prayers, and Endeavours, bring his Mind.

III. *Thirdly,*

III. Thirdly, THE more a Man values heavenly Treasures, the more will he lay out on other Things for advancing his eternal Interests. Indeed, we must not think of buying Heaven with our Money. But yet, when from a Principle of Love to GOD, out of Obedience to his holy Will, and out of a Design for his Glory, we spend our worldly Wealth in doing good to the Souls and Bodies of Men, and promoting his Interests and Kingdom: When in the Name of Christ, we offer up our Substance, together with our selves, to his Service, and lay it out therein, though this will not merit heavenly Riches, it will meet with a Reward, a rich Return in Heaven. To this Purpose is that Saying of our Saviour, ^f *Make to your selves Friends of the unrighteous Mammon, that when ye fail, or when ye die, they may receive you into the eternal Habitations.* And it is more fully explained, by that of the Apostle to Timothy, ^g *Charge them that are rich in this World, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain Riches, but in the Living GOD, who giveth us all Things richly to enjoy: That they do Good, that they be rich in good Works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in Store for themselves a good Foundation, against the Time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal Life.* To the same Purpose may be alledged, though it was a Commandment originally given to a particular Person, in particular Circumstances, ^h *Go sell all thou hast, and give to the Poor, and thou shalt have Treasure in Heaven.* For the general Mean-

^f Luke xvi. 9. ^g i. Tim. vi. 17, 18, 19. ^h Mat. xix 21.

The Reasonableness of laying up

SERM. VII. *ing* will still hold good, that what we lay out of our Substance, in Obedience to a divine Command, shall not go unrewarded.

INDEED *Alms-giving* will not by it self recommend to the Favour of G O D, nor entitle to the heavenly Treasure and Inheritance. It may proceed from very bad Principles, and therefore not be a *good Deed*, tho' Good be done by it. It may proceed, for Instance, from a Prodigal and *lavish Humour*, and then it is only an *heedless Waste* of divine Bounty. It may proceed from *Vain-Glory* and an eager Appetite for Fame and Applause, and then it is mere *Traffic and Merchandize*, an Exchange of Money for Fame: It is a Bribe to the Needy to publish our Praises, and pass us upon the World under a commendable Character. It may proceed from a fond Conceit of meriting Divine Favour, and be given as *Purchase-Money* for eternal Happiness, and then it is *blaspheming Pride and Presumption*: It is arrogant Pretence to make G O D our Debtor, and Heaven our own, by laying out a little of what is his, upon his needy Creatures or Servants. It may proceed from *mere Compassion* to the Indigent, and then it is indeed an Act of *Humanity*; but there may be Tenderness for a Fellow-Creature, in that Heart which never felt the Force of Religion. There may be Pity for Men in Misery and Distress, where there is no Love to G O D, nor Regard for his Authority.

BUT though all this be admitted, it is very manifest, that G O D is pleased to put an high Value on Acts of Kindness done to his Servants, out of sincere Love to *Him*, and fervent Charity to *Them*, and promises to reward them. This is plain from our Lord's Account of the
Process

Process in the great and last Day, where he SERM. VII. mentions no other Things as a Reason why the Righteous are rewarded, but their tender and kind Regard to their Brethren in Distress, who needed their Pity and Reliefⁱ: And no other Reason is assigned for the Punishment of the Wicked, but their Neglect to do these kind Offices^k. It is very certain from hence, that our laying out of the good Things God is pleased to give us in this Life, for his Glory and the Good of his Servants, must have some good Influence towards our eternal Welfare. ¹ *With such Sacrifices God is well pleased. Such^m Labour of Love he will not forget. Nor shall they who do themⁿ in any wise lose their Reward.* I mean, if they are done out of Regard to God's Command, with a View to his Glory, and from a Principle of Devotion and Charity.

AND should not the Hope of heavenly Glory, the Wealth and Treasures of Eternity, dispose and even constrain us to manifest our Love to God, by shewing Kindness to his Servants, and relieving their Wants out of the Abundance we enjoy of his mere Bounty? Will not all who duly value the heavenly Treasure, feel this Influence, and be moved and determined to act in this Manner? Hath God *laid up* in store such Things for those that love him in a future Life, and shall we, can we, think it much, to *lay out* of his own upon those who are dear to him as our selves, when he requires it, or for any other Purposes for which he hath made

ⁱ Mat. xxv 34, 35, 36, 40. |

¹ Heb. xiii 16.

^k 42, 43, 45.

^m Ch. vi 10, ⁿ Mat. x. 42.

SERM. VII. us Stewards of these inferior good Things?

Can they have indeed a due Value for the heavenly Treasure, who think they can never *lay up* enough for themselves, and Children and Heirs, perhaps unknown, on Earth, but when they are called upon to *lay out* any Thing for GOD, start at the Thought, recoil and mis-give, must have a pitiful Pittance wrung out of their Hands, give even this with Reluctance, and retract with the Heart what they had dispensed with the Hand? Can they have fixed their Hearts on heavenly Riches, who are so greedy in grasping all they can of this World, and so grudging of all that GOD requires them to lay out for him, when all they have is the Effect of his Bounty, is in Truth his Property, and yet he has promised a Reward in Heaven, to what they lay out of it for his Glory here on Earth?

No, the Man who is most intent on *Heavenly Treasures*, will be most careful to expend his earthly Ones, for the Honour of his Sovereign, and the Benefit of his Fellow-Servants. He will esteem himself a Steward to the great Lord of Heaven and Earth, and will think it a sorry Account of his Trust, to say, that he laid up what GOD had put into his Hands, for he knew not who, and refused to produce it, when he made his Demands, or *drew Bills on him to be placed to his Account*. And this is the Case, whenever a real Object of Charity presents, or any Design for advancing the Kingdom of Christ is on Foot, to which we may contribute, without doing any Wrong to our more immediate Dependants, for whom Nature and Christianity bind us to provide. To refuse to give, in such a Case, or to give in Pro-
 + portion

portion to our Ability, is to refuse Payment SERM. VII. when the great Proprietor of our All draws upon us. And this is an open Declaration, that we do not own him to have any Interest in our Possessions, much less to be supreme Proprietor, or else is a sacrilegious withholding from Him, what we own to be his Right.

AND can any Man who *lays up his Treasure in Heaven*, and hopes for the *better and more enduring Substance*, be thus tenacious of the *Mammon of Unrighteousness*, and withhold from God what is his due? No certainly, the more a Man values heavenly Treasures, and is concerned to secure them, the more will he master this fordid Temper: The more will his Spirit enlarge, and the more generously will he relieve the Servants of Christ, and promote his Kingdom and Interests. But how to reconcile the Hopes of Heaven, with some Men's close and fast Adherence to the Things of this World, and the Fondness with which they hold their Bags and Treasures, when the most plain Demands are made upon them, by the great Proprietor of all Things, is what I cannot understand. For to reconcile the Hope of Heaven with Neglect of it, and Indifferency towards it, is, I think, impossible. And how they can be said to have any great Value for heavenly Treasures, or any strong Inclinations to them, who cling so fast to their earthly Possessions, as never to part with what they can, and ought to spare, of them, without Reluctance, though upon the most necessary Occasions, and the loudest Calls, I cannot see. Let those of you, who are rich in this World, lay this to Heart. A Value for Heaven must be manifested by our Indifferency to other Things. And this can never be made appear,

pear, where there is not a Readiness, on proper Occasions, to lay them out, for the Glory of GOD, and the Good of other Men, both bodily and spiritual. To grasp all we can for our selves, or our Children and immediate Dependants, and let go nothing, or next to nothing, for the Service of GOD, or the Relief and Comfort of his Servants, and our Fellow-Creatures, shews little Love to Him, or His, and very little Gratitude for present Favours, or the Rewards promised in a future Life, to encourage to this Duty and Act of Obedience. ^a *In as much as ye did it not to one of the least of These, ye did it not to me.*

AND thus much of the first Thing, the Duty here enjoin'd. I proceed,

II. *Secondly, To the Reasons here used for the Performance of it.* The latter Part of the Verse suggests several to this Purpose. *Lay up for your selves Treasures in Heaven, where neither Moth nor Rust doth corrupt, and where Thieves do not break through and steal.* It is, as if he had said, Lay up for your selves Treasure in Heaven, because there Moth and Rust corrupt not, &c. Yet I shall not confine my self to the Reasons expressed in the latter Clause: There are others implied in the Words, though I can't say they were in our Saviour's Mind, when he utter'd them, that deserve our Regard. And

I. *First, THE Treasure laid up in Heaven, is indeed Treasure for our selves.* It is to be remembered here, that our Saviour's Design, is not meerly to give Reasons, Why the Treasure in Heaven is to be valued and sought ab-

solutely considered, but also why this is to be SERM. VII.
 done preferably to all earthly Treasure, as is 
 plain from the Opposition, in which he sets
 them, in the two Verses. And this naturally
 leads to the Observation here made, though I
 can't say, it was in our Saviour's Thoughts;
 because the same Expressions is used with Re-
 gard to both, *μὴ θησαυρίζετε ὑμῖν*, and *θη-
 σαυρίζετε ὑμῖν*. Earthly Treasures are not, indeed,
 laid up for our selves. Whilst we are *laying in*
 our Stores, we are *laying out* our Strength,
 and wasting our Lives. In a little while we
 must leave them, and take our Farewel of them
 for ever. *° We brought nothing with us into the
 World, and it is certain, we can carry nothing
 out. P As we came forth of our Mother's Womb,
 naked shall we return, to go as we came, and
 shall take nothing of our Labour, that we can
 carry in our Hand.* When we think we have
 a Stock laid in for our own Enjoyment, for
 many Years, and that the rest may descend to
 our Children after us, neither *We* nor *They*
 may be the better for it. In the very Interval
 of the pleasing Thought may we hear a Voice
 from Heaven, saying, *† Ye Fools, this Night shall
 your Souls be required of you, and then whose will
 these Things be, which you have provided? We
 heap up Riches, but know not who shall gather
 them.* But whoever shall gather them, they
 must be no longer ours, when this Summons
 shall come. We must leave them, and leave
 them for ever.

So that the Treasure which we lay up on
 Earth, is not indeed for *ourselves*, and may not

• i Tim. vi. 7.

† Luke xxi. 20.

° Eccl. v. 15.

† Psal. xxxix.

SERM. VII. be for our Descendants. We have no certain
 ~~~~~ Tenure of it. We cannot hold in our departing  
 Breath, and when that goeth out, all  
 worldly Enjoyments go with it. They are ours  
 no more. They pass into other Hands, and of-  
 tentimes into such as are utterly unthought of  
 by us, and unknown to us.

BUT if our Treasure be laid up in Heaven,  
 it is properly for our selves. Those Treasures  
 will be our own, and that for ever, and are  
 therefore called by our Saviour, \* *The better  
 Part that will never be taken away*, and by the  
 Apostle, " *The enduring Substance*. It is Treasure  
 for ever to be possessed and enjoy'd by us. We  
 shall have as much Bliss as our Hearts can hold,  
 on our first Entrance into Heaven. And what  
 the Man possesses of Heaven at first, he will  
 continue to possess for ever, and for ever en-  
 joy. It will be his in the fullest and dearest  
 Propriety. If there be any Alteration made,  
 it will be only for the better. The Possessions  
 will increase, and grow more relishing and tast-  
 ful, the longer they are kept and enjoyed. So  
 that this is indeed Treasure *for our selves*. It  
 is a Treasure we shall enjoy in common with  
 Others; but it is what will never be transferred  
 from Us to Others, but what we shall ever re-  
 tain, and ever enjoy. Again,

II. *Secondly, It is Treasure in Heaven*, or if  
 you will, *heavenly Treasure*: And for this Rea-  
 son should be valued and chosen. And when  
 our Saviour bids us make sure of the *Treasure  
 in Heaven*, we may conceive him to suggest a  
 double Reason, why we should follow his Ad-  
 vice.

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\* Luke x. 42.

" Heb. x. 34.

(1. First,) IT

(1. *First*.) I T may be to intimate to us the SERM. VII. Immensity of these Treasures. To hint to Us that they are prodigiously great. Every one knows that by Heaven we commonly understand the vast Spaces where the Stars shine, and the Planets roll, or somewhat superior to these, and including them all. And according to the Opinions of the latest and best *Astronomers*, these Spaces are vast indeed, when they think it demonstrable that the Sun, which appears so little to Us, is yet many Thousands times bigger than the Earth, and therefore must be at prodigious Distance from Us to make this diminutive Appearance; and every fixed Star is supposed by them to be another Sun.

BUT be this as it will, GOD is pleased to use the Phrase of measuring Heaven, to signify somewhat that can never be. \* *If Heaven above can be measured, then will I also cast off the Seed of Israel.* Which is as much as to say, it is as possible to measure the Heavens, as it is that I should utterly cast off my People. And hence to signify to Us the Divine Immensity, it is said of GOD that *the Heaven of Heavens can't contain Him.* Though it be of such vast Compass, GOD cannot be contained within its utmost Bounds. His Nature is not to be limited at all, nor pent up by any Bounds. But as the *Heaven of Heavens*, which by many is accounted the Seat of the Blessed, takes in the Compass of all created Being, and therefore must be of prodigious Extent: So the Treasure of which our Saviour is here speaking is called heavenly, to intimate to us the exceeding Greatness of it. The Possessions of Hea-

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\* Jer. xxxi. 37.

† 1 Kings viii. 27.

SERM. VII. ven are vast, beyond the Ken of our Sight, beyond the Reach of our Knowledge, or the utmost Stretch of our Imagination at present. Such Things as <sup>2</sup> *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive.* When *Paul* was caught up into the third Heavens, it is said of Him, that he heard <sup>a</sup> *Words unutterable*, not only such as might not, but such as could not, be uttered in the Language of us Mortals, οὐκ ἔξον λαλῆσαι. The Expression signifies to Us the exceeding Greatness of those heavenly Things, which *Paul* saw and heard. The Treasures of Heaven are great beyond all Imagination of ours, and therefore beyond Expression.

It is an easy Thing to count all a Man's Treasures in this World, to tell all his Money, and measure all his Land, and give in the Sum of it in Acres, nay, in Feet or Inches. All his Wealth may be grasped in his Arms, perhaps, or brought within the reach of his Eye; or if not, 'tis very easily measured by his Thought: But the Riches of Heaven, not only pass the Bounds of our Sight, but the utmost Stretch of Thought. They are Possessions indeed immense, and what is more are satisfying. Earthly Treasures and Enjoyments will never satisfy. After a Man has collected the utmost heap of Treasure that he can, after he hath climb'd to the highest Dignity and Power, and acquired an Estate in full Proportion to his Rank, there will be still a great Void in the Mind, which these Things will never fill; a growing Thirst for more, which by them will never be appeased. But the Riches of Heaven will satisfy.

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<sup>a</sup> 1 Cor. ii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. xii. 4.



The Body there will be at perfect Ease. The <sup>SERM. VII.</sup> sensual Appetites will cease their Cravings. The Mind will dwell amidst infinite Delights; and feast upon the most congenial Pleasures; and this to full and constant Satisfaction. *When I awake I shall be satisfied with thy Likeness.* A Satisfaction that will answer our utmost Wishes here on Earth, and very much exceed them.

(2. Secondly,) **THEY** are called *heavenly Treasures*, to intimate *the Glory and Magnificence of those Possessions*. They are Treasures much more glorious and sparkling than any here on Earth. I have shewn before in what pompous Allusions the holy Scriptures paint the Happiness of Heaven. They speak of it as a *Kingdom, a Kingdom of Glory, as Glory it self, nay, as an exceeding Weight of Glory*, as much as Minds improved and invigorated to the uttermost will be able to sustain. And this, I think, is intimated by our Saviour, when he calls these Treasures *heavenly ones*.

HEAVEN, you know, is that Region of the World, where the Stars are seen to shine; and the Sun appears to make his annual and diurnal Circuits, dispensing Light and Heat. Hence <sup>2</sup> *his going out*, is said to be, *from the End of Heaven, and his Circuit to the End thereof*. And because of the Amplitude of the heavenly Spaces, and the Sun and Stars and Planets that seem to move about in them, they are said to <sup>a</sup> *declare the Glory of GOD*, that is, his Majesty and Splendor. Hence is it elsewhere said; that <sup>b</sup> *They who are wise shall shine as the Bright-*

<sup>1</sup> Psalm xvii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Psalm xix. 6.

<sup>a</sup> Verse 1.

<sup>b</sup> Dan. xii. 3.

*The Reasonableness of Laying up*

SERM. VII.

*ness of the Firmament.* Our Saviour tells us, *They shall shine as Suns in the Kingdom of their Father.* And surely the Glories of the visible Heavens are but faint Resemblances of those of the heavenly State. And yet the beholding them with our Eyes is a proper Medium to call our Thoughts up higher, and engage us in the Contemplation of greater Glories, veiled from our Eyes by the visible Heavens themselves, and lying still within them.

OUR Saviour therefore, by bidding us *lay up our Treasure in Heaven*, seems to offer in the Advice it self this Reason why it should be regarded, *viz.* That the Possessions of Heaven surpass in Glory, Excellency and Magnificence, all the Enjoyments of the World; and that as much as the Heavens themselves brightened with the Glories of the Sun and Moon, and with the glittering of so many Stars, exceed this Clod of Earth in Splendor and Magnificence. He intimates to us that as high as Heaven is above the Earth, so much superior are the Treasures of Heaven to any here below. There is a much greater Distance between the greatest Potentate on Earth, drest out in his most glorious Robes, and shining in his utmost Majesty, and the meanest of the royal Inhabitants of Heaven (where all are *Kings* and *Priests*) than there is between the vilest Beggar and the mightiest Monarch here. As much doth the glorified Saint excel the majestic Mortal, as the Sun out-shines a Glowworm. One blazes only in borrowed Brightness, a Brightness derived from Things beneath him, the Other shines out in his own Excellency, or what is more grand,

## *Treasure in Heaven represented.*

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in the Glories of GOD, communicated to Him, and reflected from Him. A plain and forcible Reason, sure, why we should *lay up Treasure in Heaven, and not on Earth.* Again,

*Thirdly, THEY are called Heavenly Treasures, to intimate that they are Divine.* Heaven is frequently in holy Scripture called the Residence, the Seat, *the Throne* of GOD. Hence he is said to <sup>d</sup> *be in the Heavens.* <sup>e</sup> *To dwell in Heaven.* Hence Heaven is called his <sup>f</sup> *holy Habitation*; or in other Terms, <sup>g</sup> *the Habitation of his Holiness, and his Glory.* And therefore is it his Habitation indeed, because he there makes the brightest Displays of his Glory. In the same Sense our Saviour says, <sup>h</sup> *In my Father's House are many Mansions.* Thus his <sup>i</sup> *Throne, is said, to be in the Heaven.* Nay the <sup>k</sup> *Heaven, is said, to be his Throne, and the Earth his Footstool.* Hence our Saviour gives it as a Reason to his Disciples, why they should *not swear by the* <sup>l</sup> *Heavens; because it is GOD's Throne.* And in the Visions of St. John, the Saints in Heaven are said to be *before the Throne,* and *he who sitteth on the Throne,* is said, <sup>m</sup> *to dwell among them.* It is elsewhere expressed, <sup>n</sup> *GOD himself shall dwell among them.* I suppose, in Opposition to his Symbolical Presence with the Jews in the Tabernacle. It is not the Ark of GOD only, that will dwell with his People in the *New Jerusalem,* Himself will dwell with them, his own immediate Presence

<sup>d</sup> Psal. cxv. 3. Eccl. v. 2.

<sup>e</sup> Psal. cxxiii. 1.

<sup>f</sup> Deut. xxvi. 14.

<sup>g</sup> Isa. liii. 15.

<sup>h</sup> John xiv. 2.

<sup>i</sup> Psa. xi. 4.

<sup>k</sup> Isa. lxi. 1.

<sup>l</sup> Mat. v. 34.

<sup>m</sup> Rev. vii. 15.

<sup>n</sup> Chap. xxi. 3.



*The Reasonableness of laying up*

SERM. VII. shall be afforded them. *G O D and the Lamb*  
 shall supply the Place of a material *Temple*. *The*  
*Sun and Moon shall never shine* there, because  
<sup>n</sup> *G O D and the Lamb will be the Light*  
*thereof*.

Now as Heaven is the Place of *G O D's* Residence, of his Throne, and glorious Presence, where his own Light and Splendor puts out that of the Sun, and his own Wealth and Fulness, poured out on the happy Inhabitants, render all Creatures Supplies useless and unnecessary, our Saviour intimates thus much to us, when he bids us lay up Treasure in Heaven. The Enjoyments of Heaven are truly Divine. *G O D* himself is the Treasure of that World. ° *In his Light shall his Saints see Light*. In Himself will they meet with all Fulness, and enjoy the utmost Satisfaction. His Glory their Eyes shall behold, their Hearts adore, and their Tongues celebrate and praise for ever. At him they will look with Wonder, Reverence and Pleasure, 'till they are formed into the same Image, and made as like him as they can be.

*A N D* is it not much more valuable than all worldly Enjoyments, to dwell with *G O D*? to be blessed with his Sight, to be filled with his Fulness, to be feasted with his Love, and to be ravished and satisfied with his Enjoyment for ever? It is this, indeed, makes Heaven a State of perfect Life. To dwell with him who is *essential Life*, and be for ever under his immediate Influence, must needs impart continual Vigour to the Mind, and all its Powers. His Light will shine in upon the

° Ch. xxi. 22, 23.

° Psal. xxxvi. 9.

Understanding, and remove all Ignorance and Error, his Life will diffuse itself through the whole Soul, and his immense Fulness, satisfy every Desire, and so fill up the Mind, that it can need, can hold no more. What are the Honours, or Pleasures, or Possessions of this World, to come in Competition with the Treasure of Heaven, where GOD, in all his Majesty and Excellency, is to be beheld with Pleasure, conversed with with the utmost Freedom, and enjoyed with the highest Satisfaction and Ravishment for ever? Let heavenly Treasures therefore have the Preference. They vastly surpass those here on Earth. They are more copious, certain, suitable and relishing, to an immortal Mind, purified from the Dregs of Sin, and made spiritual and divine, by the Operation of the Spirit of GOD. But,

III. *Thirdly, THE Treasures in Heaven are incorruptible.* This is the first Reason directly offered in my Text. *Lay up Treasure in Heaven, where neither Moth nor Rust corrupt.* It is an *P Inheritance incorruptible, to the lively Hopes of which, we are begotten again, by the Resurrection of Christ from the Dead.* And it is called incorruptible for two Reasons.

I. *First, BECAUSE it is an eternal Inheritance.* The Treasures of Heaven are everlasting. How often is this Epithet given them in holy Scripture? Those that *q believe in Christ, have everlasting Life.* They who have their *r Fruit unto Holiness, have their End everlasting Life.* *† They who sow to the Spirit, shall*

*p* 1 Pet. i. 4.  
*q* John iii. 16.

*r* Rom. vi. 22.  
*†* Gal. vi. 8.

SERM. VII. *of the Spirit reap Life everlasting.* Our Saviour is the <sup>r</sup> *Author of eternal Salvation to all who obey him.* Through him the <sup>u</sup> *Elect obtain Salvation with eternal Glory.* <sup>x</sup> *All, who by patient Continuance in well doing, seek for Glory, Honour and Immortality, shall have eternal Life.* This is <sup>y</sup> *the Gift of God,* <sup>a</sup> *the Promise of the Gospel,* and <sup>b</sup> *the Hope of all, who are called by it, to be Saints.* So that nothing is more plain from the Scriptures, than that the Riches of Heaven are to be lasting as Eternity, are never to have an End. Once the Man is possessed of them, he may rest assured, that he shall continue in Possession for ever. As long as his own immortal Being shall last, will his Happiness also endure.

AND is not this a very strong Motive, to lay up Treasure in Heaven. Were the Enjoyments of a future Life inconsiderable in Themselves, low and lifeless to a great Degree, yet, considering how much longer they must last, than earthly Enjoyments can, that their Duration will be endless; they must even infinitely exceed these, however relishing they may be, during their Continuance. For the Enjoyments of Time may be measured, their *quantum* may be known, and summed up: But what has no End, can have no Measure. It is Quantity unlimited. And therefore the Happiness of a future Life, though lower, in it self, than the Happiness of this Life, yet, upon the whole, must infinitely exceed it; because of its ever-

<sup>r</sup> Heb. v. 9.

<sup>u</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 10.

<sup>x</sup> Rom. ii. 7.

<sup>y</sup> Rom. vi. 23.

<sup>a</sup> 1 John ii. 25.

<sup>b</sup> Tit. i. 2.



lasting Duration. But when we consider, that <sup>SERM. VII.</sup> the Riches of Heaven are great in themselves, vast beyond Imagination, and truly divine, as well as durable, how do all the Enjoyments of the World dwindle and disappear before them? as Stars and Glowworms are lost when the Sun shines out in his Strength. There is no common Measure of them, no kind of Proportion between them. The Riches of Heaven are immensely great, and last for ever. The Enjoyments of Time are little, and mean, and transient. They are only suited to the animal Part of the Man, lie within a narrow Compass at the most, and are quickly gone. Should we possess them during our whole Lives, yet <sup>c</sup> *what is our Life, but a Vapour, that appears for a little while, and then vanishes away?* And how precarious and uncertain is the Tenure, by which we hold it? Yet many times <sup>d</sup> *they make to themselves Wings and fly away*, before this short uncertain Life determines. But at Death they take Flight for ever, and are gone past all Recovery. And are such transient and unstable Possessions, fit to come in Competition, or indeed, stand a Comparison with the eternal Riches of Heaven, and the <sup>e</sup> *Pleasures in GOD's Presence for evermore?* But,

2. Secondly, THE Treasures of Heaven are *incorruptible* in the most proper Sense of the Word, *they will not waste nor decay*. It is an Inheritance <sup>f</sup> *that fadeth not away.* ἀμάρτανον *non marcescens*, that withers not, as Grass, when it is cut down, loses its Vigour, and has

<sup>c</sup> Jam. ii. 14.

<sup>d</sup> Prov. xxiii. 5.

<sup>e</sup> Psa. xvi. 11.

<sup>f</sup> 1 Pet. i. 4.

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its Substance diminished by subducting the nutritious Juices. But the heavenly Inheritance is liable to no such Change. They who possess it, will never find the Fuel of their Life and Pleasures to fail or be withdrawn. A full Supply of both is continually ministred to them. The Vigor of the Mind is ever at the highest. The Objects of its Satisfaction, shine in upon it with undiminished Splendor for ever, and for ever look fresh and fair, amiable and attractive, as at first. And what then should abate the Bliss, or subduct from the Delight and Satisfaction? Indeed, whoever is there, is in the very Region of Pleasure and Happiness. There is as much, as his Mind can take in, should its Capacities be growing for ever. It is the peculiar Quality of the heavenly Enjoyments, that they never tire, but invigorate the Faculty. They never pall the Appetite, but ever excite and improve it. The Eye is there *ever satisfied*, but never satiated, *with seeing*. The Heart is ever delighted to the full, but never weary of its Pleasure. So that the Satisfaction continues always at the Height; there is no Abatement of it, as well as no End. It continues for ever, and for ever in the very utmost Degree of which the Mind is capable. Nay, it is without Interruption. Never wholly over, nor ever over for the shortest Interval.

MUCH of this Life's Pleasure and Enjoyment is cut off by Sleep: Men forget themselves in the needful Intervals of Refreshment, and have no Enjoyment, except the slight and transient Pleasures of a Dream. And whilst they are awake, they cannot long bear the same Pleasure. After a little Acquaintance, the Object grows familiar, and loses its Power to please.  
Repe-

Repetition of the same Enjoyment cloyes ; VARIETY and Novelty only can keep up the Appetite. But heavenly Pleasures, though they are still the same, are ever fresh, as at the first, and equally entertaining. The Mind, amidst these Fruitions, is in its own Element. The State is natural to it. Every thing feels easy and agreeable. Whereas among the Pleasures here on Earth, especially, such as are forbidden, it is vilifying it self, doing Violence to its nobler Powers, and forcing a Felicity upon it self, which it cannot enjoy and rest in. It is cramming down Pleasure which it can't relish, or which it no sooner swallows, but it sickens upon it, nauseates the Draught it hath taken down, and turns to another Object. Amidst these Enjoyments, the Man is ever restless, tost from one thing to another, hunting after Pleasure and Content, but disquieting and fatiguing himself in vain. Every Enjoyment palls by Custom, and what the Man grasps in his Arms, with Transport to Day, by to Morrow he will loath, and it may be hate to see. For worldly Enjoyments are only animal. They are not fitted to an intellectual and spiritual Nature. There is no Harmony between them : No Agreement of one to the other. Whereas, between glorified Minds, and the glorious Objects about them, there is the most perfect Harmony, the most exact Agreement. And hence that never fading Pleasure, which is the peculiar Privilege of Heaven. Pleasure is there for ever at the Height, without Abatement. The Treasures of Heaven never diminish or decay.

AND is not this the Wealth to be preferred ? Are not these the Enjoyments to be chosen and sought for our selves ? The Pleasures



ures of Heaven are not only endless, but continual. Not only are they continual, but continue for ever at the Height, in the very utmost Degree of Perfection. Will be never less than they were at first. They spread Life and Vigour thro' the Soul, and enliven the Faculties, as well as exercise them. This is Enjoyment that will yield a continual Feast. Happy Minds are fed to the full, without ever being surfeited or cloy'd. Perpetual Supplies of Pleasure, are only perpetual Supplies of Life, and everlasting Extasy, though it strains all the Powers of the Soul, will never weaken nor weary it. And is not this a State, above all others, to be desired? Are not these Treasures that deserve a Preference to all earthly ones? Again,

IV. *Fourthly, We should lay up Treasure in Heaven, because this is Treasure not to be lost. There Thieves break not through nor steal.* This also may imply two Things.

(I. *First.*) PERSONS *can't be dispossessed of this Treasure, by Fraud or injurious Violence.* This is the direct Sense of the Expression here used. Once we get Possession of these Treasures, there will be no Danger of having them taken from us in this Manner, either by Fraud or lawless Force. Against this, worldly Possessions cannot be secured. They are many times the Prey of those who have superior Power. Though we confine our Treasure within never so many Locks and Bolts, it may be wrested from us. When we hold our Estate, as we think, by the firmest Tenure, a Flaw may be found in the Title by a subtle Lawyer, and we by Forms of Justice forc'd to resign Possession: And lawless Power will many times dis-

dispossess Men of their Rights, without any SERM. VII. Form or Ceremony at all. This is the Common Case in time of War, which are Seasons of unrestrained Rapine and Plunder; when they seem to be authorized. And it is too common a Case in times of the greatest Peace, under arbitrary Princes. Nor does it seldom happen, when more private Oppressors are too rich, or too mighty, to be contended with, by those whom they oppress. And when our Property is secured from the Invasion of lawless Power, it is many times undermined by the Craft of secret and disguised Robbers. All the Enjoyments of this World are liable in this Manner to be lost.

BUT the Possessions of the heavenly State are out of all Danger of this Kind. There shall we be safe from the insidious Practices of the cunning Knave, the secret Injury of the Thief, or the open Violence and Outrage of the Robber and Oppressor. We shall be far out of the Reach of all our Enemies, and incorporated with a vast Body of the wisest, kindest and most faithful Friends: These will never envy our Advantages, but rejoice in them; never seek to dispossess us of our Wealth, but study rather to augment it. *Our* Happiness will be an Ingredient in *Theirs*. For they will not only be blessed by their private Enjoyment of their own Stock, but will have an Accession of Pleasure from the common Bliss of the whole Body, and the particular Felicity of every Fellow-Member. In short, there we shall indeed *love our neighbour as our selves*, and therefore never give any one, with whom we live, the least Provocation to harm us: And we shall have the like Degree of Love, from  
\* every

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SERM. VII. every one of the Society, who will therefore never seek an Opportunity to do us Harm. So that there we shall be blest in our G O D, and our Redeemer, and in the happy Temper of our own Spirits, and shall also be mutually blest in one another, without any Danger of Discord or Enmity for ever.

AND as nothing within can endanger our Possessions, neither will any thing from without. We shall be for ever out of the Reach of those who wish us Harm. They may *gnash their Teeth* at us, but they cannot worry us. They may repine at the Security of our State, but they cannot disturb it. They may rage to see us out of their Reach; but this will only recoil upon themselves, and augment their own Vexation, without doing us any Mischief, or so much as making us uneasy.

AND to have all the Possessions of Heaven, so vast and glorious, so suitable and divine, so durable in themselves, and so productive of perpetual Life and Bliss, secured from the Possibility of being taken from us! put for ever out of the Reach of their Power or Spite, who wish us Harm, how desirable is it? How delightful the Prospect? How much, upon this Account, are they to be preferred, to all earthly Enjoyments? But

(2.) *Secondly*, THESE Treasures once possessed, *are never more to be forfeited*. As they are not to be taken from us by Fraud, or lawless Force, neither are they to be lost any more by any Faults of our own; nor we deprived of them, by the Exercises of legal Authority. For there we shall be perfected in Holiness, and for ever out of the Reach of Temptation. We shall live in the immediate Presence of the



GOD of Glory and Love, and be awed by his Authority, from doing any thing to offend him, and excited by his Favours and Smiles, to do every thing that will please him. There the glorified Mind will be perfectly imprest with his Image, and made perfectly conformable to his Nature and Will. There will not be the least Remainder of Contrariety to GOD in it, but the most strong, permanent, and perfect Inclination to him, as the Soul's Rest and Center. Nothing therefore from *within* will ever prompt to do Evil, and nothing from *without* will ever tempt to it. For the Mind will be entirely rid of all sensual Inclination. It will be far removed from all the enchanting Objects of this World, that did so powerfully here on Earth insinuate into the Heart. And there will be no Devil, nor Instrument of *Satan*, to persuade and allure by plausible Motives, or impel by terrifying ones, to the Commission of Evil. Such a Soul must therefore be secured for ever of the divine Friendship, Favour and Endearments. This is the very Wealth of Heaven, which can only be forfeited by Sin; And Sin will be an eternal Stranger to that happy Region.

AND in this Respect it far exceeds the Treasures on Earth. For no Man is out of Danger of losing these by Faults of his own, and legal Forfeitures. Many thro' Weakness are made the Tools of wicked Men, and drawn unwarily into Designs pernicious to themselves, and ruinous to their Estates. Many are at the Command of their own Pride, Ambition or Revenge, and pushed by them on rash Designs and desperate Attempts, that end in the Ruin of themselves, and Loss of their Estates. And  
in

*The Reasonableness of Laying up*

SERM. VII. in many Governments, when the Person himself is not a Criminal, the Substance may. Arbitrary Power can declare an Estate forfeited when it will; and either make a Pretence for seizing it, and destroying the Possessor, as *Jezebel* did by *Naboth*, or tear his Estate from him, without any Pretences at all, by mere Dint of superior and unrestrained Power. To this Inconvenience all worldly Possessions are liable, from which the Treasures of Heaven are eternally secure. And to have Possessions so vast and valuable, without any Hazards of this kind, how much will it heighten the Pleasure of the Possessor?

AND upon the whole, Is there not infinite Reason, why we should *lay up our Treasure in Heaven*, and not on Earth. Seeing the Possessions of this World can't be held beyond the Term of this short Life, may be wrested out of our Hands by Craft and Fraud, torn away from us by Violence, forfeited by Mistakes and Miscarriages, against all which we have no certain Security. Besides which they waste of themselves, *perish in the using*, and for the most Part can only please by Novelty, but grow insipid by growing familiar, and nauseate upon repeated Fruitions.

WHEREAS the Treasures of Heaven are *glorious*, beyond the Reach of our Ambition, *vast* beyond the utmost Stretch of our Imagination, *durable* as our immortal Spirits, *secure* as the immutable Promise of GOD, *who cannot lie*, and the Purchase of our Redeemer can make them, are *ever relishing* as at the very first, will quicken the Appetite, but never pall it, and are neither to be rent from us by Violence, nor stolen from us by Fraud, nor forfeited

*Treasure in Heaven represented.*

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feited by any Fault of ours, seeing we shall SERM. VII.  
there be ever freed from Inclination to Evil  
from within, or Temptation from without.

AND thus have I laid before you, the Rea-  
sons expressed and suggested in my Text, why  
we should *lay up our Treasure in Heaven*. What  
remains, is to make Improvement, which will  
be my Business in the next Discourse.







*Advice to Poor and Rich.*

The third

S E R M O N

On *MATTHEW* vi. 20.



MATTH. vi. 20.

*But lay up for your selves Treasures in Heaven, where neither Moth nor Rust doth corrupt, and where Thieves do not break through and steal.*

SER. VIII.



THREE Things I propos'd to do, when I first enter'd on the Consideration of these Words, *viz.*

I. *First*, To consider the Import of the Advice, and shew *what it is to lay up our Treasure in Heaven.*

II. *Secondly*, To consider the *Reasons with which this Advice is supported and enforced.* And,

III. *Thirdly*,

III. *Thirdly, To improve and apply all.* The SER. VIII. two first of these have been done, in the two former Discourses. I proceed therefore in the

III. *Third Place to improve and apply* what has been said. Which shall be done (1. *First,*) By some *Inferences* of Truth, and (2. *Secondly,*) By some Directions and Rules for Practice.

And from hence we may infer,

I. *First, THE Wisdom and Excellency of sound and true Religion.* By this alone can we be made capable of possessing or enjoying the heavenly Treasure and Inheritance. Without a sincere Compliance with the Terms of the Evangelical Covenant, we can never possess it. Upon this alone have we a fair Title to it. And it is only a Spirit of sound Religion, that can qualify and fit us, for the Enjoyment of this Inheritance. Were it possible for Sin to be pardoned, whilst the Sinner remains in his Pollution and Pravity; Could he have a Title to Heaven given him, whilst he remains destitute of an heavenly Temper he would not be capable of enjoying, though he should possess, the Treasures of Heaven. And indeed such a Gift as this, would rather mock and upbraid, than content and delight. What would it signify to confer a Title to a large Estate, or put one into Possession of it, who is under an utter Incapacity of enjoying it, from a Complication of the most painful and tormenting Distempers, and likely to remain for ever under the Power of these Distempers, without the least Hope or Prospect of a Cure; if he could neither behold it with his Eyes, nor taste any of the Products of it, nor survey it *Himself*, nor hear

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it

SER. VIII. it with any Relish described and commended by  
 Others?

OR what would it signify to take a Man of mean Birth and Education, who has no Taste of the Pleasures of a Court, nor Value for the Splendors of a Crown, and set him on a Throne, and bow the Knee to Him with the most obsequious Homage? He would be mocked by his own Majesty, vexed and teized with his own State. He would gladly be stripped of his present cumbersome Robes, to put on his former Rags, and quit his Throne and the Burthens of a Court, to wallow in Straw, and walk in the Dirt, at his former Ease.

SOMEWHAT like this, would be the Case, should we suppose the *Sensualist*, the *Ambitious* or the *Votary* of *Mammon* conveyed, with all his furious Appetites after the Enjoyments of this Life, to the heavenly Regions and Possessions. He would there be altogether out of his Element, amidst Objects that in his Account have no Charms, and could therefore give him no Entertainment or Satisfaction. To be for ever confined to such Objects, and with-held for ever from such as are infinitely dearer and more valuable to him, must eternally vex and disturb, but could never satisfy Him. Heaven it self to such a Temper, must be a Place of Torment.

IT is necessary therefore that we be fitted for the Enjoyment of the heavenly Inheritance before we can possess it, or at least before we can have any Satisfaction in it, if we could possess it. This cannot be, without true and sound Religion. Without a Spirit made celestial and divine, or such a Temper of Mind, as I have, in part, described in the preceding Discourses.

With-



Without this, there is no Title by any Grant SER. VIII. from GOD, and therefore no fair Title at all, to this blessed *Inheritance of the Saints in Light*: Without this, there is no *Meetness* for it.

Is it not, then, a Point of the truest Wisdom, is it not, properly speaking, the *only Wisdom*, to be religious towards GOD, a true and real Christian? Is not that the truest and greatest Wisdom, that proposes to it self the most excellent End, and pursues this Design by the most apt and proper Means? And can any End be more noble and worthy, than to aim at the Possessions and Perfection of Heaven, those Possessions which are the Consummation both of our Natures and our Bliss? Is it not the general Inclination of human Nature, as essential to the Mind as Gravitation is to Bodies, to be easy and happy? Hath not GOD worked this into our very Constitution, so that we can as soon cease to be, as cease to wish our selves easy and pleased? This is not the Matter of our Deliberation and Choice, though it be amidst what Objects we will seek our Ease and Pleasure.

AND is it not an act of true Wisdom to follow this Bias of the reasonable Nature, and pursue after *true Bliss*, the proper Pleasures of such a Nature? And where can this be had, if not in the Possession of the heavenly Treasures? If not in the Enjoyment of the *chief Good*, that blessed and glorious Being, who is at once the Original and Perfection of Life and Bliss? This is the very End for which we were made spiritual and reasonable Beings, that we might be happy for ever in the perfect Knowledge,

SER. VIII. Love, Service and Enjoyment of the GOD who made us. And is it not an Act of the greatest Prudence, to fall in with this noble and blessed Design?

AND can any Method be so apt to promote this Design, as a Course of serious Piety and evangelical Obedience? A deliberate Choice of GOD in Christ as our GOD, and Heaven as our Home, and the Region of our Happiness, followed with an hearty and diligent Application of our selves, to the Use of the Means, *viz. Faith in Christ, Repentance from dead Works, and the Practice of universal Holiness*, that we may settle and dwell for ever in Heaven, and be made meet for the Pleasures and Enjoyments of it?

IF we judge of the *Fitness* of the *Means* by the Opinion of GOD concerning them, these are the Means himself hath appointed. If we would judge by the Nature and Evidence of Things, it is obvious, that if we would be fitted for the Enjoyment of heavenly Pleasures, we must now believe, and relish, and value, and chuse them before all other Possessions and Enjoyments, and make this appear by all those Methods, in which such a Preference is to be discovered.

AND if, upon the whole, it be true Wisdom, to propose to our selves the most noble and excellent End, and pursue this by the most direct and proper Means, real Christianity is the true Wisdom, it is the only Wisdom. It is no Wonder therefore, that, in Scripture-Language, *Wisdom* and *Folly* should stand for *Religion* and *Wickedness*, or that they should be made to signify the same Things. In this Sense

is it said <sup>b</sup> *Fools despise Wisdom* : <sup>c</sup> *Fools hate Knowledge*. So again <sup>d</sup>, *If thou incline thine Ear to Wisdom, and apply thine Heart to Understanding, then shalt thou understand the Fear of the LORD, and find the Knowledge of GOD.* <sup>e</sup> *Happy is the Man that findeth Wisdom, and the Man that getteth Understanding.* My Son, let them not depart from thine Eyes. Keep sound Wisdom and Discretion; so shall they be Life to thy Soul, and Grace to thy Neck. Be not afraid of sudden Fear, nor of the Desolation of the Wicked; for the LORD shall be thy Confidence, and keep thy Foot from being taken. In the same Sense our Saviour saith, <sup>f</sup> *Wisdom is justified of her Children.* And on the other hand <sup>g</sup> committing Folly is being guilty of heinous Wickedness. In this Sense it is said, <sup>h</sup> *GOD will speak Peace to his People; but let them not return again to Foolishness*, i. e. Sin and Wickedness. In the same Sense it is said, <sup>i</sup> *The Folly of Fools is Deceit.* So that Wisdom, you see, in the Language of Scripture, frequently signifies true Practical Godliness; <sup>k</sup> *Pure Religion and undefiled before GOD and the Father*, as it is called by the Apostle; and Folly the quite contrary. And surely with very good Reason, as is evident from what I have said. It is an Instance of true Wisdom, *to lay up Treasure in Heaven*, to seek and secure the Heavenly Substance; which cannot be done without Faith in Christ, Repentance towards

<sup>b</sup> Prov. i. 7.

<sup>c</sup> Ib. ver. 22.

<sup>d</sup> Prov. ii. 2. 5.

<sup>e</sup> Prov. iii. 13, 21, 22, 25, 26.

<sup>f</sup> Luke vii. 35.

<sup>g</sup> Judg. xx. 6.

<sup>h</sup> Psal. lxxxv. 8.

<sup>i</sup> Prov. xiv. 8.

<sup>k</sup> Jam. i. 37.



SER. VIII. GOD, leading an holy Life, and acquiring an heavenly Temper; that is, without being truly devout and religious. And sure, to neglect this heavenly Inheritance, <sup>1</sup>*to lay up Treasure for our selves without being rich towards GOD*, as the Expression is elsewhere, is the very last degree of Folly. But,

II. Secondly, WE hence see, That GOD doth not expect we should *serve him for nothing*, or *without Expectation of a Recompence*. He doth not expect we should serve him for Nothing; he intends to make us full Amends for our faithful Service. *Job* tells us of the Wicked in his Time, that they said to GOD, <sup>m</sup>*Depart from us, we desire not the Knowledge of thy Ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what Profit should we have, if we pray to him?* And *Elibu* charges *Job* himself under his Affliction with saying, <sup>n</sup>*It profiteth a Man nothing that he should delight himself with GOD*; how justly, is not a place here to examine. Certain it is, that tho' *Job* at first <sup>o</sup>*did not charge GOD foolishly*, or wickedly, yet in the Height of his Anguish many Expressions dropt from him, that savour of much Impatience. And yet he is proposed to our Imitation, as the most glorious <sup>p</sup>Example of Patience among meer Men: A plain Evidence, by the way, that Perfection in Holiness is not necessary to the Favour of GOD.

BUT whether *Job* had said as much as *Elibu* charged on him, or no, there is no Charge a-

<sup>1</sup> Luke xii. 21.

<sup>m</sup> Job xi. 14, 15.

<sup>n</sup> Job. xxxiv. 9.

<sup>o</sup> Job i. 22.

<sup>p</sup> Jam. v. 11.

gainst Religion that doth more Mischief, when it is admitted as just. For what Men think in their Hearts is utterly against their Interests, they never will be persuaded heartily to embrace and follow. But no Charge can be more false and unjust than this, as is evident from all that hath been said. Indeed, we are bound by our holy Religion to prefer greater Interests to those which are less, and future Interests to present ones; but then we are assured they are incomparably greater and more important. So that it would be the greatest Folly imaginable, to make a Difficulty of giving up one for securing the other. It is but parting with Toys to secure our Treasure; quitting Chaff and Emptiness to preserve the *enduring Substance*. And would it not be extreme Folly to hesitate here, and refuse to yield up all we have on Earth, to make sure of Heaven. Would not the Exchange be infinitely to our Advantage? The Balance of the Account be vastly in our Favour?

CERTAIN it is, that our Religion forbids no Pleasure that is rational; but it invites to the Enjoyment of what is Spiritual and Divine. It doth not strip us of all the Possessions of Time, or bind it upon us to quit the World, and coop our selves up in a *Monastery*, or wander about in a *Desert*; but would have us neglect these perishing Things in comparison of better, and not love the World at the Cost of our Souls, and the eternal Inheritance. And if we can have Patience to wait the Result, at the Determination of this short Life, and keep on in a religious Course according to the Rules of the Gospel, how much will it appear to be for our Advantage, to have been faithful to God, and

SER. VIII. persevering in such a course? When all the  
 ~~~~~ Treasures of Divine Bounty shall be laid open,  
 all the Glories and Riches of Heaven shall stand
 in full Prospect! how will this delight our
 Eyes, and rejoice our Hearts? Are Crowns,
 and Thrones, and an incorruptible Inheritance,
 reserved for us in a future Life? and may the
lively Hope of all this give us a Contempt of all
 the Wealth and Grandeur, and sensual Delights
 of this World, and support us under the great-
 est Burthens of Life; and yet can it be said,
 that GOD requires our Service for nothing?
 No certainly, he'll make us full Amends *here-*
after, for all we do or suffer for him *here*. We
 have the utmost Reason to *be stedfast and im-*
moveable, always abounding in the Work of the
LORD, knowing that our Labour cannot be in
vain in the LORD. The GOD we serve is no
 hard Master. He does not leave us to do the
 Services he requires in our own Strength, but
 helps by his own mighty Power, and recom-
 penses our poor Performances at last vastly
 above their Worth.

BUT some who know we shall not *serve*
 GOD *for nothing*, yet think it criminal and
 mercenary, and the Mark of a *legal* not an
evangelical Spirit, to serve GOD in Expectation
 of such Recompence. But how directly are
 they confuted by my Text, and all I have been
 saying on it? What is it, *to lay up Treasure in*
Heaven, but to look up to *the Recompence of*
Reward? To believe, and value, and chuse,
 and seek after heavenly Riches, and endeavour
 to secure them for our selves? And is not this

a plain and exprefs Command of our Saviour? SER. VIII.
And other Commands are elfewhere given of the very fame Import. Thus we are required
* to work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling. † To feek and mind the Things which are above. † To feek the Kingdom of GOD and his Righteoufnefs in the firft Place; that is, Heaven, as the End, and Holinefs as the Way to it. Thus our Saviour bids his Difciples not to labour^u [or work, *μὴ ἐργάζεσθε*] for the Food which perifheth, but for the Food which endureth unto eternal Life. We are required^w to do good according to our Ability, to be rich in good Works, &c. that we may lay up a good Foundation againft the Time to come, and lay hold of eternal Life. As Timothy is particularly charged before to * fight the good Fight, and lay hold of eternal Life; to faften on it, and not let go his Hold.

AND have not all the Saints, under every Dispensation, practifed according to this Rule? Does not GOD exprefly declare, that he was † not afhamed to be called the GOD of the ancient Patriarchs, becaufe they fought a better Country than what they left, even an heavenly one? Did not Moses^z efteem the Reproach of Chrift greater Riches than the Treafures in Egypt, becaufe he had refpect to the Recompence of the Reward? Doth not^a David tell us, he had inclined his Heart to perform the Statutes of GOD always, with a view to this Recompence? Indeed our Translators render it, *always to the*

^r Phil. ii. 12.

^r Col. iii. 1, 2.

^c Matt. vi. 33.

^p John vi. 27.

^z 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19.

^x Ib. ver. 12.

^y Heb. xi. 14, 16.

^z Ib. ver. 26.

^a Pfal. cxix. 112.

End;

SER. VIII. *End*; but the Original signifies *Fruit* and *Recompence*, as well as an *End*; and that, as *Ety-mologists* tell us, because *Fruit* is the *End* of *Labour*, as *Recompence* is the *End* of *Service*. And accordingly the *Seventy* render it *ὁ ἀνταμείψω*, for the *Recompence*. *David* therefore had direct respect to the *Recompence*, in inclining his *Heart* to *God's Statutes*. Many of the ancient Believers ^b suffered grievously, nor would accept *Deliverance*, that they might obtain a better *Resurrection*.

AND under the evangelical Dispensation, Christians have acted upon the same Principle, without Blame or Censure. The believing *Hebrews* ^c took joyfully the spoiling of their Goods, knowing they have in Heaven a better and an enduring Substance. No meer Man was ever a more glorious Instance of Heroick Piety, nor more remote from a mercenary Mind, than the Apostle *Paul*; yet did he make the heavenly Prize his Aim. ^d Forgetting, saith he, the Things which are behind, and reaching forth to those Things which are before, I press towards the Mark, for the Prize of the high Calling of *GOD*, which is in *Christ Jesus*. Every Expression in the Original has Force and Energy in it. It signifies, ^e That he stretched forward according to the Level he had taken, that he might pursue and seize the Prize, or *Recompence* in view; with a plain Allusion to the *Grecian Racers*. He put forth his Hands and his whole Body, as a *Lapide* observes, to reach the Goal, and seize the Prize, e'er his Feet came at it. All which

^b Heb. xi. 37.

^c Heb. x. 34.

^d Phil. iii. 13, 14.

^e Τοῖς ὁ μιστροδεν ἡμελινω-
μεν, κατὰ σκοπὸν διώκειν ἐπὶ
τὸ βραβεῖον.

plainly

plainly implies, that he exerted himself to the utmost, in Pursuit of the heavenly Treasures and Reward. This was the Prize for which he ran; and he stretched towards it as one resolved to obtain it. And did not the Prospect of this Recompence keep up his Courage under all his Suffering? ^f *For this Cause we faint not; for those light Afflictions, which are but for a Moment, are working out for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory. For, adds he, we look not at the Things which are seen, and temporal, but at the Things which are not seen, and eternal. We take our aim at them.*

NAY our blessed Lord himself, ^h *for the Joy set before him, endured the Cross, and despised the Shame.* His human Nature needed rational Supports, and human Encouragements and Comforts in all his Duties and Sufferings. It was his Assurance that GOD would highly exalt him that made him obedient to Death, even the Death of the Cross. He knew, that ⁱ *if he suffered, he should enter into his Glory, and reign.* And surely, if the perfectly holy and innocent Man Christ Jesus, might encourage himself to obey and suffer, to do and bear the Will of GOD, by this Consideration, so may every Christian. If it was not mercenary in him, nor will it be in them. ^k *We may hope to reign with him, if we suffer with him.*

CERTAIN it is, that GOD promises eternal Life to encourage both to faithful Duty, and to cheerful suffering. Thus St. Paul closes up

^f 2 Cor. iv. 16, 17, 18.

^g Σκοπῶμεν, ὡς σκοπὸς σί-
μῃ; id quod acturus, σκοπῶ.

^h Heb. xii. 2.

ⁱ Luk. xiv. 20.

^k Tim. ii. 12.

SER. VIII. his Discourse of the Resurrection, ¹*Wherefore be ye stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the Work of the LORD; forasmuch as ye know that your Labour shall not be in vain. Labour hard, and keep on, because you know 'twill not be Labour in vain. Thus he bids us elsewhere not^m be weary of well-doing, for that in due Time we shall reap if we faint not. And thus our Saviour, to encourage to Fidelity in a Time of Tribulation, saith, ⁿbe faithful to Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life. And St. Peter exhorts the Elders to do their Duty faithfully and cheerfully, without Covetousness or Reluctancy; and backs the Exhortation with this Consideration, ^othat when the chief Shepherd shall appear, they should receive a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away. Now to what purpose are all these encouraging Promises, if no regard must be had to the Recompence promised? Nay, it is to them only, who pursue after heavenly Riches, that they are promised. They who would have ^peternal Life, must seek for Glory, Honour and Immortality. It is the proper Evidence of our ^qbeing risen with Christ, to seek the Things above. All who are taught by the Gospel ^rto live soberly, righteously and godly in the World, are taught to look for that blessed Hope.*

INDEED, unless we may expect the Happiness of Heaven, the Graces of *Faith* and *Hope* are in a manner cashier'd; they have no Objects to fix upon: That Faith and Hope, I mean,

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 58.

^m Gal. vi. 9.

ⁿ Rev. ii. 10.

^o 1 Pet. v. 4.

^p Rom. ii. 7.

^q Col. iii. 1.

^r Tit. ii. 11, 12, 13.

which

which are by the Apostle declared to be ^{the} *Substance of Things hoped for, and the Evidence of Things not seen.* By which Faith, he tells us just before, *the Just shall live.* For how can Faith realize the future Glory, and Hope by lively Expectation of it, give a present Subsistence to it in the Mind, if it be utterly unlawful for a Christian, and the Mark of a mercenary Spirit, to have Respect unto it? Vain, and worse than vain, are the Evidences of Faith, and the Expectations of Hope upon this Supposition. It is a Doctrine that puts out the Eye of Faith, and breaks the Anchor of Hope. Graces that have only their Use in this Life, and will in a future Life be changed into immediate Intuition, and full Possession and Enjoyment.

AND after all, what is this Expectation of eternal Life, and aiming at it, but pursuing the most genuine Inclination of humane Nature? It's Inclination towards Bliss, in the Enjoyment of GOD; it is aiming at Perfection, at being completely holy and happy. For what is the heavenly Treasure we expect and aim at? It is nothing else but the Perfection of our Natures and our Pleasures, in the perfect Love, Service, and Fruition of our GOD and Saviour: And is it mercenary to make this our Aim? Can any Design be greater or better? Can any thing be more pleasing to GOD than such a Pursuit, or more fit for us? Is it not the very ultimate End of our Being, the original Purpose of our Creation? And is this to be debased with the Epithets of Mercenary and Unchristian? What an unnatural and in-

[Heb. xi. 1.

[Chap. x. 31.

SER. VIII. consistent Thing would these Men make of Christianity? But 'tis all Misrepresentation. Christianity is a Religion consistent with Reason, and with it self; it pursues the great Ends of our Being, and directs us to do so: And therefore to expect the Riches of a *future Life*, as a Recompence of our faithful Services in *this*, tho' a Recompence infinitely exceeding the Desert of such Services. We may from hence infer,

III. *Thirdly*, THE great Goodness and Benignity of GOD to Men, in laying up for them such prodigious Wealth and Treasures in a future Life. Consider the Thing *in it self*; what an amazing Instance is it of Divine Love, to advance Worms, meer^u *Dust and Ashes*, to such high Dignity, to enrich them with such immense Treasures, and rejoice and satisfy them for ever with such ineffable Delights! To admit them within the Blaze of his own immediate Presence, that they may behold his Glory, and^w *see him Face to Face*! To bless them with his Love, and satisfy them with his own Fullness for ever! To stretch their Minds and Capacities to the utmost, and then fill them up with the most relishing Pleasures, and most satisfying Possessions; such I mean as are spiritual and divine, and enable them to feast on these Delights for ever, without being surfeited or cloyed, or feeling the Relish in the least to abate^s. Is not this Beneficence becoming God, worthy of the Sovereign of the World, the Possessor of Heaven and Earth, and who is

^u Gen. xvii. 27.^w 1 Cor. xiii. 12.^s Gen. xii. 19.

possessed of infinitely more within himself than SER. VIII. Heaven and Earth can contain? He can bless and satisfy the Soul with Himself; and with his Love, and Likeness, and Enjoyment, ravish it for ever, and put it out of need of any other Supplies. And is it not an Instance of the most glorious Benignity in him, thus to enrich his poor Creatures, and admit them to live in his Presence, and feast on his Fulness with everlasting Content and Pleasure?

BUT when we consider, that they who here on Earth are entitled to the heavenly Treasures, and will hereafter possess and enjoy them, were once sinful Creatures; Wretches who had forfeited all his Love and Favour, and incurred his Displeasure, and made themselves obnoxious to his Vengeance: How doth this magnify the Mercy of GOD, and encrease the Obligations of Men? That they should not only be pardoned and reconciled to GOD, but privileged at this high rate, and thus beloved and blest! What Grace is here! But when we go on and consider, that *it is the Gift of GOD through Jesus Christ our LORD*; that it cost him his precious Blood to purchase these Treasures; that he died to procure eternal Life for sinful Men; we are lost in delightful Wonder and Confusion.

AND yet we have not done. Tho' heavenly Treasures are the Gift of GOD, they are also, as I have shewn, the proper and kind Reward of our Services. But for what poor Services are these great Wages paid? For such as instead of meriting any kind Returns from GOD, do not deserve Acceptance. Though they are

SER. VIII. well meant, yet are they so faultily defective, as to need a Pardon, instead of meriting a Reward. They must be forgiven before they can be received. And yet will G O D reward, and reward at such a rate, what is not worth his Acceptance? And doth not this speak his great Good-will, his rich and flowing Benignity to Men? That he will bestow so much upon them, and bestow it in so free and gracious a Manner! and bestow it under the Notion of a Recompence for their Services! How vast a Recompence, and how much exceeding their Deserts! They had merited Vengeance instead of Favour, the Flames of Hell instead of the Joys of Heaven. And the best Services they are capable of performing, cannot challenge Acceptance for their *own sake* at the hands of G O D, but must intreat Forgiveness for *Christ's sake*; and be recommended by his Merit and Intercession, before they can be owned of G O D, as Services done to him, or as such be accepted of him. In what a Light doth this Consideration set the Divine Benignity! *Oh that Men would praise the LORD for such Goodness*, for such surprizing Grace and Good-will to the Children of Men. This is giving out his Favours like a King, *the King of Kings, and LORD of LORDS*. This is a Distribution of his Bounty that is grand, magnificent, and Godlike; in a way becoming his peerless Majesty, Wealth, and Benignity, and an uncontrolled Evidence of them.

A N D thus much by way of Inference. I now proceed to apply the Subject by some Directions for Practice. And,

First, T H I S should put us all on looking into our selves. This of *laying up Treasure in Heaven*,

Heaven, is not a particular Duty of Religion only, like an Act of Justice or Mercy to Men, or Worship to God; though no one of these should be willfully omitted, or left undone, when we are called to it. But it is a View running thro' all our Religion, and essential to it. Not to do this is, in effect, to renounce Christianity, and declare, by our Conduct, that we do not believe its principal Doctrines; or at least, that they have no Influence on our Hearts and Lives. It is of the last Importance, therefore, to know what our Behaviour is in this Particular; what the real Sense and Persuasion of our Minds about the heavenly Riches, and what our real Inclinations towards them, or whether we have any Inclinations of this kind at all. To want this is to be defective in a vital Part. We are but lifeless Images of Christianity, meer spiritless Resemblances of Religion, unless we are animated by this heavenly Principle. Let this therefore be seriously enquired into. Search into your selves, and beg of God *to search and try with you*, that you may know whether you have indeed *laid up your Treasure in Heaven*.

Do you thoroughly believe the holy Scriptures, and what is delivered in them, concerning the future Riches and Inheritance? Is this a Persuasion wrought deep into your Minds, such as is relishing and affects the whole Soul, and moves the whole Man? Or do you content your selves with dry and spiritless Notions of these Things; such as have nor Life nor Force, that stir up no Affection, nor move any Power of the Mind? Are not your Apprehensions of them meer transient Thoughts, that come into your Minds without any *Design* of yours, stay there without making any *Impression*,

SER. VIII. *pression*, and are lost out of them without any
 *Concern?*

Do you truly *value* these heavenly Treasures, and that from a sound understanding of their Nature, as they are spiritual and divine, and result from the Perfection and Purity of your own Spirits, and the Presence and Enjoyment of your G O D and Saviour? Or are you wholly indifferent to them, and thoughtless about their Worth, and your own Interest in them? Or, if you have some Value for them, do you indeed prefer them to all other Interests and Treasures? Is the Wealth of Heaven more esteemed by you than earthly Riches? Are you more ambitious of heavenly Glory, than of all the Pomp and State on Earth? Do you more affect the Pleasures at G O D's Right-hand, than the most delicious Pleasures of the carnal Mind, and the most gustful Fruition of sensible Things?

ARE you so heartily affected towards heavenly Happiness, as to *prefer* it in your deliberate Choice to every thing else, and resolve, that, with G O D's Blessing and the Help of his Grace, you will possess and enjoy it, whatever it costs you? Or, can you be content to give up your future Hopes, and all Claim to the *heavenly Inheritance*, so you may have all your Hearts can wish of sensible Enjoyments and Possessions? so you may have large Estates, or sounding Titles here on Earth; may have Power and Pre-eminence among your Fellow-Creatures, or enjoy your sensual Pleasures to the full?

WHAT hath most of your *serious* and *concern'd Thoughts*? Is it your main Care, the chief Study and Concern of your Souls, now to obtain and secure the Favour of G O D, and get safe to Heaven at last? Or is this little upon
 your

your Thoughts, whilst you quite fatigue your Minds with busy Solicitude, and painful and perpetual Concern about earthly Things?

ARE you inquisitive, as those resolved for Heaven, about the way thither? Do you enquire in good earnest, *what you must do to be saved*? And do you shew the Firmness of your Resolution for Heaven, in your diligent use of the Means appointed of GOD to bring you thither? Are you indeed concerned, that the original Quarrel between GOD and you be made up, by the good Offices of Christ, the only Mediator? Are you willing to come under his Laws and Influences, and the medicinal Methods and Rules of his Grace and Gospel? Are you truly concerned through him to obtain the Pardon of your Sins, and be reconciled by his Merit and Intercession, to your injured and angry Sovereign? Are you sincerely willing and solicitous to be cleansed, by his Spirit, from all your *Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit*, original and acquired, that you may be fit Objects of divine Complacency, and capable of the Pleasures of divine Friendship? Are you hearty in complying with the Terms of the Gospel? Do you renounce every Sin without Exception? Are you willing to honour your Redeemer, by entire Reliance on his Merit and Intercession, to recommend you to GOD, and on his Grace and Spirit, to enable you to please him? Have you *yielded your selves up to GOD by him*, to be governed by his Laws, guided by his Counsels, animated by his Spirit, and dealt with according to his Pleasure? Is it now your Concern to please GOD, and order your Conversations aright before him? Do you carefully shun all known Sin, and *abstain from the Ap-*

SER. VIII.

Appearance of Evil? Do you truly love your Duty, love to know it, and take Pains to find it out, and love to perform it as far as you know it? Are you diligent in attending on the means of Grace, appointed of G O D, for carrying on an Intercourse between him and his People, through the Mediation of Christ? Do you make daily Visits to him in private and Family-Worship? Do you rejoice in the publick Opportunities of waiting on him? and not satisfy your selves with meer bodily Attendance, or the external Performances of Religion, but endeavour to have your very Hearts and Souls engaged, and duly impressed with divine Things, that Sin may be mortified in you, the World may be conquered by you, a divine and heavenly Temper may be maintained and cultivated, and inward vital Religion preserved and promoted?

Do you so value the heavenly Treasures, as heartily to withstand, whatever would oppose your Passage to eternal Glory? Are you resolved, by the Grace of G O D, never to be taken off from the Pursuit, by any of the Arts and Snares, and plausible Pretences, nor shaken in your Purposes by the most furious Onset; of your spiritual Enemies? Do you daily exert your selves in mortifying vicious Inclinations, and seek to shun, or endeavour to vanquish all external Temptations? That so neither the Suggestions of your own corrupt Hearts, the Flatteries of a fawning, or the Terrors of a frowning World, may alter your Purposes, or abate your Zeal, in the Pursuit of heavenly Treasures? Or on the other Hand, are you regardless of Danger? Do you expose your selves to Temptation, and yield to the Insinuations of
the

the Tempter, and give way before your Enemies, and hazard your eternal Happiness, to secure your present Ease and Interests? SER. VIII.

How do you stand affected towards the Enjoyments of this World? Doth the Prospect of better, make you indifferent to present Things? Are your principal Pleasures derived from your heavenly Hopes? Amidst the greatest Affluence of worldly Comforts, can you indeed prefer the Pleasures of divine Friendship, and wish for the Consummation of it in Glory? Do your future Hopes more rejoice and elevate your Hearts, than your present Fruitions? Can you bear the Loss of worldly Goods if your heavenly Treasures are secure? And as long as God denies you not Himself, nor the Freedom of conversing with him, nor an Inheritance among the sanctified, nor the Hope of an *Inheritance among the Saints in Light*, can you be content to be poor and destitute, to be mean and contemptible, to be the very Dross of the World, and the vilest among Men? And if God is pleased to bless you with abundance of the good Things of Life, do you endeavour *to be rich in good Works, to do good, to communicate, to make you Friends of the unrighteous Mammon, and lay up in store a good Foundation against the Time to come, that you may lay hold of everlasting Life*? Do you endeavour to lay out, what you can spare, and God expects, for his Glory and the Good of your Fellow-Servants? Lay out like faithful Stewards of these common Gifts of Providence? Do you in a Word *lay out* your Treasures on Earth, like those who have *Treasure laid up* in Heaven? Or, do you hug and hold it fast, as if this were indeed your Treasure, the Wealth

SER. VIII. on which you set your Hearts? What you cannot trust out of your own Possession, no not in the Hands of God himself, who is Proprietor and Lord of your all; and yet hath promised to make full Compensation, for what, as the Stewards of his Bounty, you expend in his Service, though it be his own? I mean, provided it be done from a Principle of Love and Duty?

By a fair and honest Answer to these Enquiries, your true State may be known. Endeavour, I beseech you, to be impartial in your Searches, and faithful to your Souls; for the Matter is concerning your Lives. And this will prepare the Way,

II. *Secondly*, To a two-fold Exhortation. (1. *First*,) To such as hitherto *have not laid up* their Treasure in Heaven. And (2. *Secondly*,) To such *as have*.

I. *First*, To such *as have not laid up their Treasure in Heaven*. And this (1. *First*,) To the Poor. (2. *Secondly*,) To the Rich.

I. *First*, To the Poor who have not laid up their Treasure in Heaven. Those who have no large Portion of present good Things, but are in Straits, and find it hard to get *daily Bread* for themselves and Families, or even want the Necessaries of Life. Be persuaded and prevailed upon now, *to lay up your Treasure in Heaven*. Set not your Hearts on those Possessions which the great Lord of all Things with-holds from you. But endeavour to secure an Interest, in those eternal Treasures, of which he, in the kindest manner, invites you to partake. If you had the Prospect of a Change in your outward Condition, how would it rejoice your Hearts? If you were sure your Poverty would
shortly

shortly be turned into the greatest Plenty, would not this delight you? Or if you were directed to a certain Method how this might be done, would you not apply your selves immediately to the Use of the Means, embrace the present Opportunity, and exert your selves to the utmost? Doubtless you would.

Now the Gospel proposes to you, a sure Method to be rich for ever. You are therein directed how to secure the heavenly Treasures. Treasures that are vast beyond the Stretch of your present Imagination; What will fully content and please you, spread Life and Joy through the whole Soul, and keep up its Relish to the Height for ever. You have no Prospect of being rich in this World. Is it not therefore your Wisdom and Interest to secure that Treasure which is most valuable in it self, and may be yours, if you do not stupidly neglect, or wilfully refuse it? Seeing you can have no Estate in present Possession, or none but what is mean, should you not endeavour to secure so valuable a Reversion? Valuable not only for what it will be when it comes to be possessed, but for its Influence towards your present Peace and Pleasure? The chusing this Treasure for your selves, secures you of the divine Blessing in all other Respects, and brings you under a Promise of all needful Good at present. ** If you first seek the Kingdom of GOD and his Righteousness, all other Things shall be added to you.* And the Hope of so vast a Treasure, such a *Weight of Glory* approaching must greatly support and solace you, under all the Weights and Pressures, all the Wants

* Matth. iv. 33.

SER. VIII. and Straits of your present Condition. You are ^b *poor in this World*, should it not therefore be your great Concern that *you may be rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom?* That you may have a Support and Sufficiency growing out of your glorious Hopes? But besides this,

YOUR neglecting this Treasure will expose you to the most sure and frightful Ruin, to extreme and everlasting Misery. By rejecting the Mercy of GOD in the Gospel, and throwing up the Hopes of Heaven, you bind upon your selves the Sentence of Condemnation, and render Hell and *Destruction from the Presence of GOD* inevitable. And can you bear the Thought of being wretched in both Worlds? In perpetual Want and Distress in this Life, and in perpetual and eternal Anguish and Agonies in the Life to come? Can you resolve to go without the good Things of Time, and give up the comfortable Hopes of Eternity too? To suffer the Inconveniencies and Grievances of Poverty now, and let this be only an Introduction to the utmost Vexation and Torment for ever? How will it rack you, when you are past Hope, to think, that once you were in Prospect of eternal Glory, you were invited and pressed to have Treasure in Heaven, but you utterly refused it, though you had nothing in Exchange, but Poverty and Distress then, and the utmost Want and Woe now? Is not this Behaviour utterly unreasonable? Mad and foolish to the last Degree? Do any Men act after this stupid Manner, with Regard to worldly Interests and Concerns?

^b James ii. 5.

†

THINK

THINK seriously of this, and let not this SER. VIII. repeated Invitation of the great GOD be rejected? But, whilst it may be had, *lay hold of everlasting Life.* Resolve, by GOD's Grace, not to be wretched both for Time and Eternity. Pray earnestly to him in Christ's Name that, though he thinks fit to deny you the Comforts of Time, he would not shut you out of his Favour on Earth, nor his glorious Presence in Heaven. Pray that he would reconcile you to Himself by Christ, and make you *Heirs of the Kingdom.* You may depend upon it, if you are truly willing to be rich and happy for ever, the great GOD is as willing you should. Nay, you have Liberty and Boldness to go to him, and in the Name of Christ beg those Influences of his Spirit, that may conquer and remove all the Reluctance of your Minds, and make you sincerely and heartily willing to be happy for ever, in the Way prescribed by the Gospel. Do not be easy in your selves, nor desist from importuning the GOD of all Grace, till you find, you have an Interest in these Treasures secured, by having Hearts that value and chuse them, and resolved, by the Help of GOD, not to come short of them, whatever it may cost you. But I must address,

II. *Secondly, To the Rich, who have not laid up Treasure in Heaven.* Who, whatever they have of this World, *are not rich towards GOD.* GOD hath been pleased to pour out his Bounty on you. You have not only what is necessary for the bare Support of Life, but all that is requisite to render Life easy and comfortable, as far as this is in the Power of out-

‡ Luke xii. 21.

SER. VIII. ward Means. You feel none of the Wants with which others are pinched, none of the Straits to which the Poor are reduced. Whilst others wear themselves out with daily Labour and incessant Toil, you live at Ease. Whilst they are in Want of all Things, you wallow in Plenty. Whilst they have hardly Cloths to cover their Nakedness, or defend them from the Inclemency of the Weather, you can, not only fence your selves from this, but dress and deck your selves with costly Jewels and Apparel, and draw and dazzle the Eyes of Beholders.

BUT what doth all this Wealth and gaudy Shew signify, if you are destitute still of the true Riches? If your Hearts are bound down to Earth and earthly Things? If you have no Love for G O D, no Taste of heavenly Pleasures, no Desire after the Perfection of the better World? Nay, if you count not all your present Interests and Enjoyments as Dung and Dross, compared with the heavenly Treasures and Inheritance? It is not long before this Appearance of Things, this ^d *Shew of a World* will pass away; before you'll be stript of your Possessions, your Bodies must be put off, and your naked Souls remove to the eternal World, and at the Bar of G O D receive Sentence ^e *according to what you have done in the Body, whether Good or Evil.* And then must all your present Wealth and Plenty be accounted for. You may make a Figure amongst Men, and be valued for your great Estates, and advanced Stations in the World, but these Things will in

^d 1 Cor. vii. 31. *Σχήμα τῷ κόσμῳ.* ^e 2 Cor. v. 11.

no wise recommend you to the divine Favour : SER. VIII.
If you are found on Trial to have been Neg-
lecters of the heavenly Treasure, your present
Abundance will only add Weight to your Guilt,
and Fuel to your everlasting Misery and Tor-
ment.

AND can you in this View of Things, yet
part with heavenly Treasures for the sake of
earthly ones? Can you bear the Thought of
dying, and leaving all your Treasure behind
you, and hasting into Eternity naked and desti-
tute of all Things? Of being ejected out of
all your present Possessions, without the Hopes
of recovering them again, or having any Thing
in Exchange but the utmost Want and Mise-
ry? So that however deliciously you may fare
every Day at present, you will not then have
one [†] *drop of Water to cool your Tongue*? Can
you think of giving up at once the Possessions
of Time, and the Hopes of Eternity, when
you come to die? To leave so much beloved
Enjoyment behind, and have no Prospect of
any Thing but everlasting Want and Wretch-
edness before you? Bethink your selves, what
a Prize is now put into your Hands. GOD
has given you the Blessings of Time, and he
offers you eternal Happiness. You have earth-
ly Riches and Treasures, and it is your own
wilful Rejection of it only, that can exclude
you out of the heavenly Inheritance. If GOD
should require you to [§] *sell all you have and
give to the Poor*, and look for your Recom-
pence in Heaven, he would do you no Wrong;
He would only expect what he has a Right to
demand, and it were your Wisdom and Duty

[†] Luke xvi. 24.

[§] Matth. xix. 21.

SER. VIII. to comply. But he lays no such Burthen upon you. He allows you to keep your present Possessions, and yet invites you to the Enjoyment of much better. You may be rich now and happy for ever. And how will you be able to answer it to your selves, if you neglect this amazing Offer? If you slight and reject this kind Invitation?

IF you are touched with any Sense of Gratitude or Ingenuity, if you can be moved with a Regard to your own Interests, if you have any Concern to escape the most dreadful Ruin, a Ruin that will be the greater for your present Mercies and Advantages, or any Desire to enjoy the utmost Happiness, suffer not your Hearts to settle any longer among earthly Enjoyments. Endeavour, in the Use of appointed Means, and by the Help of the holy Spirit, to get them lifted above the World, and fixed for Heaven. Make sure of the Treasure there to be had, the Pleasures and Delights there to be enjoyed, which are durable as Eternity, and will for ever be tastful and satisfying.

IT hath been an heinous Sin in you, and an Instance of the most egregious Folly, to let earthly Treasures hitherto possess your Hearts, and betray you into a Contempt and Neglect of those in Heaven. Persist not, I beseech you, in this Madness and Transgression. Your Lives will quickly end. Though you may promise your selves many Years of riotous Delights on Earth, this ^h *Night your Souls may be required of you*, and the Dream of Enjoyment be ended at once. How will they sit shiver-

^h Luke xii. 20.

ing on your Lips, should this Demand be made SER. VIII. so soon? With what Violence must you be torn away from Life? With what Regret must you part with all your earthly Possessions? With what Anguish and Despair must you give up the Hopes of Heaven, and with what Horror shoot the Gulf, and pass into Eternity? As you would avoid all the Agonies and Throes of a departing Soul in these Circumstances, be now persuaded to believe, and value, and set your Hearts upon the Treasures of Heaven; that when *† Flesh and Heart shall fail*, and worldly Possessions shall drop thro' your Hands, and worldly Glories vanish from your Eyes for ever, *GOD may be the Strength of your Hearts, and your eternal Portion.* But I proceed,

II. *Secondly, To exhort such as have laid up their Treasure in Heaven.* And here I shall address also both to Poor and Rich. And,

I. *First, To the Poor in this World*, who, through divine Grace, *are rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom*, the celestial Kingdom. Be you persuaded to be *easy, thankful and comfortable.* Though GOD hath denied you the Possessions of this World, he has not denied you better Things. He hath given you an Interest in his Christ, in Himself, in all the sure and precious Promises of the Covenant of Grace, and the great Promise of it in particular, eternal Life. Keep your Eyes and Hearts much upon your future Inheritance. You labour hard now for your daily Bread, and many of you perhaps are pinched with Want, and perplexed to the last degree how to provide for the necessary Support of your Family. This is a strong Temptation to Discontent in

† Psalm lxxiii. 26.

SER. VIII.  your selves, repining against Providence, and to envy the better State of others. But let the *Hope that is set before you* be your Relief, and enable you to repel it. GOD doth not think fit to give you the *Fatness of the Earth*, but he hath entitled you to the Felicity of Heaven. If you have no Scene of Pleasure opening to your View in this World, you may turn your Eyes towards a better, and solace and regale your Souls with a Prospect of the *promised Land*, your heavenly Inheritance. An Inheritance vast as your Wishes, and beyond them, durable as your Being, as the very Being of GOD, and suitable to the Relish of the Divine and new Nature within you, the Enjoyment of which will not only delight but invigorate your Minds for ever.

SHOULD not these Hopes alleviate your present Burthens, soften your present Cares, ease your Grievs, give you Contentment with your Condition, and a Sufficiency in your greatest Straits? Doth it become you to be discontented or uneasy, repining or complaining? Though you have not so much of this World's Wealth in present Possession, have you not an Estate in Reversion exceeding far that of the wealthiest Worldling, or the mightiest Potentate on Earth? And how short will the Time of your Sufferings and Sorrows be? How soon will they be over, and for ever at an end? And though present Wants and Grievs must make some Impression on your Minds, ^k *no Affliction being for the present joyous but grievous*, yet, since ^l *the Time is short*, should you not weep as though you wept not? GOD is by these light

^k Heb. xii. 11.

^l I Cor. vii. 30.

Afflictions, *which are but for a Moment,* ^m *work-*SER. VIII.
ing you up for an eternal Weight of Glory. Can you be angry with him for this kind Intention? Or dare you challenge him upon the Fitness of his Measures? Is he not the best Judge in what Way and by what Means, you are to be cleansed *from all Filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit?* And can you doubt his Love, when he hath designed you for eternal Glory and Happiness, and given you Hearts to value and chuse the heavenly Treasures? And when you have the utmost Assurance both of his Wisdom and Love, have you not all the Reason in the World to resign your selves to his Pleasure, and be content with the Allotments of his Providence? Though your Estate in this World is but poor and mean, though your selves may be the Contempt and Scorn of such as are more at Ease, in a little while you'll ⁿ *shine as the Sun in the Kingdom of your Father.* Your Rags shall be put off, and your Robes put on. Your Labours shall be at an End, and eternal Rest succeed. Your Wants shall cease for ever, and your Souls be enriched with the Possession of the utmost Good, and be indeed ^o *filled up with all the Fulness of GOD.* All the Services and Sorrows of a short Life shall issue in perfect, perpetual and never-ending Felicity. And should not you be contented?

It is fit you should be more than contented. You should be comfortable and thankful. Amidst all your Distresses and Grievances, your weary Labours and your pinching Wants, there is Room and Matter for Joy. Your Souls may

^m 2 Cor. iv. 17. ⁿ Matth. xiii. 43. ^o Eph. iii. 19.

SER. VIII. rise above the Clouds that environ you. Your Eyes may ^P enter into that which is within the Veil. You may by lively Hope anticipate the Joys of Eternity, and bring the Milk and Honey of *Canaan* into the *Wilderness*. You may fetch down Bread from Heaven, and feed on *Angels Food*, though you may not have Abundance of *the Meat that perisheth*. Turn off your Thoughts from the melancholy Part of your Condition, and take a Prospect of the Joy that is set before you, the Treasures and Inheritance prepared for you. Can you look upon your selves as the Children of GOD, and Heirs of Heaven, just upon the Borders of full and perpetual Bliss, and yet not be joyful, not be glad with *exceeding Joy*? Not break out into Thanksgiving to GOD, and the most grateful Acknowledgment and Admiration of his great Mercy and Goodness towards you! Such as shall silence all your Complaints, and give you Sufficiency amidst your greatest Straits? Sure, this is what you should be aiming at, for your own Comfort, and the Credit of Religion. But I must address,

II. Secondly, To the Rich, who are also rich towards GOD, and have laid up their Treasure in Heaven. I would exhort them,

i. To be Watchful. Though GOD hath filled your Hands with the good Things of Time, he has lifted your Hearts above them. They are settled on the heavenly Substance, and seek and pursue it as their Treasure. Yet it is needful you should be warned against ¹ the Deceitfulness of Riches, and kept on your Guard, lest your earthly Treasures insinuate into your Af-

^P Heb. vi. 19.

¹ Matth. xiii. 22.

fections, and steal your Hearts from G O D. Lest they abate your Devotion for G O D, and your Zeal and Diligence in Pursuit of heavenly Things. Surely Riches are in themselves a very dangerous Snare, or our blessed Lord had never told us that, *it is easier for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle, than for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Nor would the ^f Apostle have given so strict a Charge to the Rich not to be high-minded, nor trust in uncertain Riches. Be sensible of your Danger, and be ever vigilant, lest your Plenty and Affluence should make you forget G O D: And the Pleasure you taste in present Enjoyments, should take off your Relish of spiritual and heavenly Things. Lest Abundance should enlarge your Views and enflame your Thirst, and render you eager upon worldly Pursuits, to the weakening your Affections and Inclinations to the heavenly Treasures. You are freed from all Anxiety of Thought *what to eat, or drink, or put on.* You have Time to mind the great Things of G O D and another World, which those who are forced to get their Bread with *the Sweat of their Brows*, cannot afford. And G O D expects these Advantages should be improved, to his Glory and your Advancement in the spiritual Life. He has eased you of worldly Cares, that you may the more intently mind the *one Thing needful.* Do not cumber your selves with unnecessary Ones from too eager an Appetite for Wealth; nor suffer your Minds to be softened and sensualized by too full an Enjoyment of present Pleasures, and

^r Mark x. 25.

^f 1 Tim. vi. 17.

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grow careless about the Concerns of your Souls, by too high a Relish of carnal Satisfactions, and too great a Delight in worldly Objects. You are beset with Snares and Enemies. As you value your Peace, your Comfort, or indeed your Souls, be ever vigilant and on your Guard. You decline in the spiritual Life, as your Value and Regard for the heavenly Treasures abate. And it is no easy Matter, to keep up this Value and Regard, in the Affluence of outward Enjoyments. You cannot be too much upon your Guard. But,

II. *Secondly, BE useful. Do good, communicate, be rich in good Works.* Lay out of the Abundance GOD hath given you in honouring Him, in serving his Interests, in supplying the Wants of your Fellow-Creatures, especially of your needy Brethren in Christ. *Be ready* upon all proper Occasions to *distribute* of your Wealth, for promoting the Interest of the Gospel, and *ministering to the Necessities of the Saints*; and give with a cheerful Heart, and with a free and open Hand, in Proportion to your Abilities. And especially when you may at once relieve the Needy, and promote the Kingdom of the Redeemer amongst Men. How can you shew sincere Devotion to him, or a real Value for the heavenly Riches, without being ready and rich in your Communications upon such Calls? Such Demands made upon you, by your blessed Lord?

It is an Act of Justice. It is but *giving him his own* when he demands it. He is Proprietor of your All. You are but Stewards even of the common Gifts of his Providence,

1 Tim. vi. 18.

1 Chron. xxix. 14.

and are bound to lay out your Substance for SER. VIII. Him, and according to his Direction. Part of  what you possess, is not properly yours at all. It is only somewhat of his committed to you, to distribute according to his Pleasure. And can you claim any Interest in him, or be sensible of his Property in your selves and what you have, and hope for the Treasures of Eternity from Him, and yet refuse to lay out *what is his*, upon his Call, and according to his Direction? Is not this with-holding from GOD what is his Due? And is not the doing so Sacrilegious? And can those, who have *laid up their Treasure in Heaven*, be guilty of such heinous Wrong to GOD?

ONE would think, if this were not a Piece of *Justice* and Fidelity to GOD, yet Minds duly sensible of his Benefits and Grateful for them, could not refuse to lay out of their Substance, for his Service and the Good of Others, when he calls for it. Put Case your Possessions were, by his free Gift made yours in full Property: That you were not Stewards only of what you enjoy, but proper Lords and Proprietors; yet are not all your present Enjoyments owing to his Bounty? And are not all your farther Expectations founded on his free and gracious Promises? Has not he enriched you with all your worldly Wealth, and given you a Title to the heavenly Inheritance, and ^x *begotten you again to the lively Hopes of it*? And is nothing to be done for Him out of Gratitude? Can you shew becoming Resentments of such Favours, without expending readily of your Abundance, for the Support and spreading of

^x 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

SER. VIII. his Kingdom, and the Supply, Relief and Comfort of his needy and distressed Saints? Indeed you cannot make Requital for his Benefits, but you may shew your Sense of them by your Beneficence to his Servants. And such is his Goodness in this Respect, that he esteems your Benefactions as ^z *done to Himself*. Can you indeed be grateful to him, and refuse to do Him such a Kindness? What he will esteem and own as such, though he can reap no Advantage from it? Nay, should not your Gratitude, on such Occasions, bear some Proportion to his Liberality? Are you Debtors to Him for your All, the Plenty you enjoy at present, and the much greater Riches of a future World, and is it grateful, (when you are called to serve his Interests and supply his Servants,) to give out of your Abundance with a sparing Hand or grudging Heart? Would not real Gratitude for such Benefits as his, make your Bowels and your Bounty flow on such Occasions?

BUT your own *Interest* should move you also to it. One way wherein you are to make it appear you have *laid up your Treasure in Heaven*, is by laying out your earthly Treasure for the Honour of GOD and Good of Mankind. And when this is done out of sincere Love to GOD, and Good-Will to Men, out of Obedience to GOD's Command, and for his Glory, he hath promised bountifully to reward it in a future Life. Thus may you *make Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness*. Thus may you *lay up a good Foundation against the Time to come, and lay hold of eternal Life*. And the Harvest hereafter, will bear some Proportion

^y Psalm xvi. 2, 3.

^z Matth. xxv. 40.

to the Seed sown here. ^a *He that soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; but he that soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully.* SER. VIII.

Is this indeed the Case? And can that Man have any due Value for the heavenly Treasures, whom this Consideration will not touch? Can he prefer heavenly Enjoyments to earthly Possessions, who will not readily give up *those* to secure *Them*? And can *He* ever find in his Heart to part with all he has for Heaven, who hath no Heart to give, what he can spare, without injuring Himself or his Dependants, nay, in a manner without feeling it, upon such Occasions? Who will not be moved by these Considerations, to do *according to his Power*, when a fair Opportunity offers, and upon some Occasions, even *above his Power*?

YOU, who have laid up your Treasure in Heaven, and whom GOD has also blessed with the *Fatness of the Earth*, will yield I hope to the Force of what I have said, and go away with this Conviction on your Minds, that one of the best Ways to make it appear, you have laid up your Treasure in Heaven, is to be liberal in laying out your present Wealth, in honouring GOD, and doing good to Men, especially to the Household of Faith.

Which GOD of his Mercy grant for Christ's sake: To whom be Glory for ever. Amen.

^a 2 Cor. ix. 6.





Walking that will please GOD.

IN FOUR

SERMONS

Preached at PORTSMOUTH
in July 1716. on

I THESSAL. IV. 1, 2.

Furthermore, Brethren, we beseech and exhort you by our LORD Jesus Christ; that, as ye have received of us, how ye ought to walk and please GOD, so ye would abound therein more and more.

SERM. IX.



A M shortly to remove, as you know, from my present to another Station. I hope you will submit to the Determinations of Providence in this Matter, and resign me; though, from your undeserved Esteem and Affection, you may do it with Regret. I think mine own Way is clear; and the Purpose I have taken, consistent with the Duty I owe to GOD, and the Affection I ought to

to have for you. It is not likely I should often, SERM. IX.
for the future, speak to you from this Place. 
I hope it will be your serious Endeavour, to
hear the little I have yet to say to you, to
better Purpose than ever. And it shall be
mine to speak in such a manner, as may
leave deep and lasting Impressions on your
Minds, when in the ordinary Course of my
Ministry, you shall no longer see *my Face*, or
hear *my Voice*. May the Spirit of Grace set in
with what I have to say, and give Life and
Force to whatever I deliver, agreeable to the
Mind and Will of G O D.

THE Words of the Apostle read to you
contain an Advice and Exhortation, proper to
be left with you as *my last*. They are a *solemn*
Charge to the Church at *Thessalonica*. We have
observable in them the Apostle's *Charge*, and
the *Manner* wherein it is delivered. The *Charge*
is, that *as they had received of them, how they*
ought to walk and please G O D, they would a-
bound therein more and more. The *Manner*
wherein it is urged is in those Words, *We be-*
seech and exhort you by the LORD Jesus Christ.
Each of these shall be distinctly considered, and
all closed with a fit Application.

I. *First*, THE *Charge* here given falls under
Consideration; and that both *in it self*, and as
to what must be presupposed. This last must
be first considered, to lead us on to the Advice
it self. It is here supposed by the Apostle that
they had received, *how they ought to walk and*
please G O D; and hereupon he charges them
to *abound in so doing more and more.* And in
order to explain the Supposition here made by
the Apostle, it will be proper to consider,



I. First, WHAT is implied in *Pleasing* GOD.

II. Secondly, WHAT in *Walking* so as to please him; and,

III. Thirdly, IN what manner they had received Directions to this Purpose, and might know their Obligation to follow them. For the Expression is strong, and carries in it an Air of great Authority. *Ye have received how ye ought to walk and please GOD.* When I have particularly gone over each of these, I shall proceed to consider the Charge it self. And,

I. First, LET us enquire, what is implied in *Pleasing* GOD. And we may rise to the full Meaning of this Expression by these Steps :

1. First, IT signifies *being accepted of* GOD. This is a Form of speaking very familiar with the sacred Writers both of the Old and New Testament. To this Purpose saith GOD to Cain, *“If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?”* To the same Sense he saith of the wicked *Israelites*, by the Prophet *Jeremy*, *“When they fast, I will not hear their Cry, and when they offer burnt Offering, I will not accept them.”* On the other hand it is promised to those who were in Captivity for their Sins, that when the Rebels were purged out from among them, all the remaining People should serve the LORD in the Land, and on his holy Mountain, and there he would accept them with their sweet Savour. To the same Purpose is it said in the New Testament, that every one

^d who feareth GOD and worketh Righteousness, is accepted of him. That Christians ^e labour, whether present or absent, to be accepted of him; ^{i. e.} whether they live or die. And the Reason of this Acceptance is in another Place plainly hinted, when it is said, ^f we are made accepted in the Beloved. So we read of ^g serving GOD acceptably; of ^h presenting our Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy and acceptable to GOD; and of ⁱ serving Christ so as to be acceptable to GOD, and approved of Men. From all these Texts, and more that might be produced, it is plain, that both Persons and Services may be accepted of GOD. And the lowest Meaning of this Expression certainly is, that he will admit them, and not refuse and reject them, nor say to them as he did by the Prophet to the wicked Israelites, ^k When ye spread forth your Hands, I will hide mine Eyes; and when ye make many Prayers, I will not hear. And considering the infinite Distance betwixt the divine Majesty and any Creature, and much more an inferiour Creature, as Man is, and the much greater Distance there is between the Holy One and a sinful Creature, this is a great Favour, an Act of amazing Condescension. But,

2. Secondly, I ^r signifies being approved of GOD. To this Purpose the Apostle charges Timothy, to shew himself approved of GOD. *Δοκιμὸν*, one who could bear the Trial, endure the Touch, and, as to his Sincerity, undergo the Search and Enquiry of GOD himself. A

^d Act x. 35.

^e 2 Cor. v. 9.

^f Eph. i. 6.

^g Heb. xii. 28.

^h Rom. xii. 1.

ⁱ Rom. xiv. 18.

^k 2 Tim. ii. 15.

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like Character doth the same Apostle give of *Apelles*, when he calls him *approved in Christ*. And what is implied in this *Approbation*, may be learnt from what he elsewhere saith, ^m *Not every one who commendeth himself, is approved; but whom the LORD commendeth.* Which Passage may receive Light from another, where he tells us, that ⁿ *he who is a Jew inwardly, and circumcised in Heart, hath his Praise, not of Men, but of GOD.* As elsewhere he tells us, ^o *I know nothing by my self; yet am I not hereby justified, but he who judgeth me is the LORD: therefore judge nothing before the Time, until the LORD come, who will make manifest the Counsels of the Heart, and then shall every Man have Praise of GOD; i. e. every one who may reasonably expect it.* And to the same Purpose doth another Apostle speak, of our *Faith being found to Praise, and Honour, and Glory, at the Appearing of Jesus Christ.*

AND this carries the Meaning of the Expression higher than the former. What has no Worth or Excellency in it at all, may be accepted by a meer Act of Grace; but when what is offered is approved with a Smile, is commended and praised, and that by a proper Judge, it must have somewhat truly valuable in it. There must be therefore somewhat of this kind in our Persons and Services, when God approves and commends them; not originally and from our selves indeed, but through the Grace of GOD. And although there can be no proper Merit in the Services of the most glorious

^l Rom. xvi. 10.^m 2 Cor. x. 18.ⁿ Rom. ii. 29.^o 1 Cor. iv. 4. 5.^p 1 Pet. i. 7.

Creatures ; though the best of *our* Services, SERM. IX. even after we are *made alive to GOD*, deserve in *Rigor of Law*, rather to be rejected than received, and blamed and condemned rather than commended and approved ; yet (the Defects of our Services being forgiven, and our Persons *accepted through the Beloved*) there is somewhat of real Excellency in the new Nature, and those gracious Operations which proceed from it, for which it may have Praise and Commendation from GOD. It is his own Offspring ; it is his Image and Resemblance ; it is the Restitution, Health, Ornament and Glory of his Creature : For all these Reasons it is valuable in *it self*, and therefore must be so in the Judgment of GOD, which is ever according to the true Nature of Things.

AND how desirable a thing is it, to be *commended and praised* of GOD ? to have his Approbation and good Word ? How grand is the Sound, and how august and important the Sense of a *Divine Commendation* ! We are very fond of the Commendations and Applauses of our Fellow-Creatures, and take much Pains, and try many Methods, to procure them. But what is the good Opinion or good Word of the greatest and wisest of the Children of Men, of the most eminent and exalted Angel or Archangel in Heaven, to that of the most glorious GOD, before whom *Angels veil their Faces*, and adore ? Not to observe that his good Opinion and Approbation include theirs ; the Sentiments of the most glorious Angels, and the wisest and best Men, being in this no more than an *Echo* to those of GOD. But,

3. *Thirdly*, It signifies farther *being beloved* of GOD. It is not only said of particular Persons,

SERM. IX. Persons, as *Solomon*, for Instance, that they *are beloved of GOD*, but of Saints in general; all who please him, are beloved by him. They have not only his Acceptance and Approbation, but are also the Objects of his Love, of his special and endeared Affection. In this Sense he is said *to give his Beloved Sleep*. He invites *his Friends to eat, and his Beloved to drink, yea to drink abundantly*. And though the only meritorious Cause or Reason of this Love, be the Satisfaction and Mediation of Christ, yet Holiness renders those who are regenerate fit to be beloved of GOD. This seems plainly intimated, at least, in that of the Apostle, where he presses the *Colossians* to mutual Love and Tenderness, as the *Elect of GOD, Holy and Beloved*. For as Christians are *chosen that they may be Holy*; so they are made holy, that they may be proper Objects of divine Complacency. Hence our Saviour tells his Disciples, that *he who bath his Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth him; i.e. he is the only Person who loves him in Sincerity; and he that loveth him, shall be loved of his Father, and he himself will love him, and manifest himself to him*. It is Obedience to Christ's Commands, that must make it appear we love him. And sincere Love to him is what renders us the proper Objects of his own and his Father's Love. And this, if possible, is more plainly exprest elsewhere, *For the Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me*. So that when any

^a Nehem. xlii. 26.

^b Psal. cxxvii. 2.

^c Cant. v. 1.

^d Col. iii. 12.

^e Eph. i. 4.

^f John xiv. 21.

^g John xvi. 27.

Persons truly please GOD, he not only accepts SERM. IX. and approves *them* and *their Services*, but truly and tenderly loves them for their dutiful and obedient Carriage towards him; And this,

(1.) *First*, WITH a Love of Complacency. He takes Pleasure in them. This also is Scripture-Language. ^y *The LORD taketh Pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his Mercy.* ^z *The LORD taketh Pleasure in his People.* And this because ^a *he trieth the Heart, and hath Pleasure in Uprightness.* In a Sense opposite to this he tells the wicked *Israelites* by the Prophet, that ^b *he had no Pleasure in them.* And informs us by the Apostle, that ^c *if any Man draw back, (i. e. desert the Christian Cause, and renounce the Christian Profession) his Soul shall have no Pleasure in him.* More is meant than is exprest. 'Tis not meer Indifference towards such that is intended; but real Dislike of them, and Displeasure against them. And this Observation will help us better to understand how GOD is said *to take Pleasure in his People*; For, as we are to conceive, that he is displeased, angry with them, set against them, when he is said *to have no Pleasure in the Wicked*; so when he is said *to have Pleasure in his People*, we are not to understand it, meerly of his kind Inclinations or Intentions towards them, but that he hath proper Complacency in them.

THERE is somewhat in their Spirit and Way of Living, that is agreeable and grateful to him; he finds a Pleasure in it. Hence it is

^y Psal. cxlvii. 11.

^z Psal. cxlix. 4.

^a 1 Chron. xxix. 17.

^b Mal. i. 10.

^c Heb. x. 38.

said,

SERM. IX. said, that ^dthe Froward in Heart are an Abomination to the LORD, but the Upright in their Way are his Delight. And elsewhere ^e; The Sacrifice of the Wicked is an Abomination to the LORD, but the Prayer of the Upright is his Delight. And though the only meritorious Cause for which any among fallen Creatures become the Objects of divine Complacency, is the Sacrifice and Intercession of our Redeemer; yet is it plain, from many Passages, that GOD hath Pleasure in his People, for their Obedience and dutiful Behaviour. ^f Whatever we ask we receive of him; because we keep his Commandments, and do those Things which are pleasing in his Sight. Thus ^g a meek and quiet Spirit is said to be of great Price in the Sight of GOD. That ^h doing Good, and Communicating are Sacrifices, wherewith GOD is well pleased. And the Apostle prays for the Christian Hebrews, that GOD would ⁱ work in them that which is well-pleasing in his Sight; which I think is explained in the rest of the Verse, to be making them perfect in every good Word and Work.

So that *pleasing GOD* in the highest Sense, signifies being Objects of his Complacency; such ^k over whom he can rejoice, in whom he can delight, are the Persons that please him. And such Conformity to his Laws as is the Result of true Obedience, such a Spirit, and Temper, and Carriage as are agreeable to his Will, are the Things which please him. Nor is it a little Pleasure he takes in his People, if the poetical Language of the Canticles may guide our Conceptions in this Matter. ^l How

^d Prov. xi. 20.

^e Prov. xv. 8.

^f 1 John iii. 22.

^g 1 Pet. iii. 4.

^h Heb. xiii. 10.

ⁱ Ver. 21.

^k Esai. lxii. 4. 5.

^l Cant. viii. 6.

fair and how pleasant art thou, O Love, for Delights! The Expression is elsewhere even more strong. ^m *Thou hast ravish'd mine Heart, my Sister, my Spouse; thou hast ravish'd mine Heart with one of thine Eyes, &c.* How fair is thy Love, my Sister, my Spouse! How much better is thy Love than Wine, and the Smell of thine Ointments (i.e. thy holy Dispositions and Exercises) than all Spices! It is great Complacency GOD hath in his Servants, if we may guess at it by such Expressions. But he loves them,

(2.) Secondly, WITH a Love of peculiar Good-will. Love of Good-will differs herein from a Love of Complacency, that the latter signifies the Delight which the LORD has in the Object he affects; the former, his Inclinations to please and do good to it. Now GOD is very kind and communicative to those who please him; and without this we should be never the better for his Love; for our Condition is naturally and necessarily indigent: We are in perpetual Want, and therefore must be in perpetual Dependance on that rich and powerful Being who first made us, and hath a boundless Sufficiency for himself and for all his Dependants. But if we have such an Interest in him as to be the Objects of his special Care and Beneficence, we must be full and secure. ⁿ *We can want nothing truly good for us.* And such an Interest in GOD all have, who truly please him; he bears them hearty Good-will; ^o *He will give Grace and Glory, and no good Thing will he withhold from them.*

HE hath a common Concern for every Creature; he pours out his Beneficence on all the

^m Cant. iv. 9, 10. ⁿ Psal. xxxiv. 10. ^o Psal. lxxxiv. 11.

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Works of his Hands; ^p *He makes his Sun to shine and his Rain to fall on the Good and Evil, the Just and Unjust.* But those who please him, stand in a much nearer Relation to him than the rest of Mankind. He hath a much greater Interest in *them*, and Concern for them: He is ready to do them the greatest Good for Time and Eternity: ^q *Truly GOD is good to Israel.* ^r *he rejoiceth over them for Good.* He is pleased with their Prosperity, especially *what is spiritual*, and concerned to promote it. He is most tenderly affected towards them; ^t *Like as a Father pitieth his Children, so doth the LORD pity them that fear him.* And is it any Wonder he should be set upon doing them good, when he gives himself the Character of their Father, and bids them make their Addressees to him as such?

AND how desirable it is to please God! How honourable, how august, to have the Approbation and Love of the *LORD of Hosts*! How safe, and rich, and happy must they be, who are the peculiar Objects of his Affection and Care! And how much should we be excited by this Consideration, *to walk so as to please GOD!* But this brings me to enquire,

II. Secondly, WHAT is implied in *Walking so as to please GOD*. Now walking, in Scripture-Language, signifies a Course of Action, the Tenor of a Man's Life and Behaviour. The Rule of Life is frequently spoken of as a *Path* or *Way*, and conforming our selves to it is called *Walking in this Way*. ^s *Make me to un-*

^p Mat. v. 45.^q Psal. lxxiii. 1.^r Deut. xxx. 9.^t Psal. ciii. 13.^s Psal. cxix. 27.

acting otherwise than GOD requires, is called *Sen. IX.*
going astray. ^w *Before I was afflicted, I went*
astray. A sinful Course is called ^x *walking in*
the Counsel of the Ungodly. Acting according to
our corrupt and carnal Inclinations, is called
^y *walking in our own Counsels,* and ^z *after the*
Imaginations of our Hearts. The New Testa-
ment makes use of the same Expressions in the
same Sense. Thus we read of ^a *walking in New-*
ness of Life; ^b *Walking not after the Flesh, but*
after the Spirit; ^c *Walking after GOD's Com-*
mandments, &c. I need transcribe no more;
enough hath been said to let you see; that by
Walking we are to understand beginning and
continuing to *live and act, so as to please GOD.*
Our Enquiry therefore under this Head is,
How we must live and act, *so as to please GOD?*
What Directions had the *Thessalonians* to this
Purpose? Or what Method must we take, ac-
cording to the Scriptures, so to live and act?
For doubtless the Apostle gave the same Direc-
tions to all Churches. And what the Scrip-
tures require to regulate our Behaviour, the
Apostle enjoined the Members of *this Church.*
And all that needs be said in Answer to this
Enquiry, may be reduced to the following
Heads; *viz.*

1. *First His Friendship must be solicited and*
sought for by us, in and through a Mediator. This
is the first Step sinful Creatures must take, to
please GOD. And such are all Mankind by
Nature; ^d *They are all concluded under Guilt;*

^w Ver. 67.

^x Psal. i. 1.

^y Psal. lxxxi. 12.

^z Jer. iii. 17.

^a Rom. vi. 4.

^b Rom. viii. 1.

^c John ii. 6.

^d Gal. iii. 22.

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Every Mouth must be stopped, and the whole World become guilty before GOD. All have provoked him by their Sins, and rendered themselves obnoxious to Condemnation and Vengeance. His just Displeasure must therefore be removed, before they can be in any Capacity to please him. His Wrath must be appeased, and his Justice satisfied. And this can only be done by a Mediator. We cannot of our selves reconcile our injured and provoked Sovereign, nor recover his Friendship: And whoever would interpose to make up the Breach between GOD and Us, must be competent of himself, and must have *his* Commission. None can *take this Office upon him* without a Warrant from GOD, how capable and well qualified soever he might otherwise be.

Now GOD, in infinite Compassion to a ruined World, has constituted such an Office, and appointed the most proper and sufficient Person to discharge it. ^f *His only-begotten Son*, who from Eternity was in his Father's Bosom, came for this End *into the World*, died on the Cross, and is ^g *now exalted*, as Mediator, *far above all Principalities and Powers*. Through him GOD is conversable with sinful Creatures: ^h *He is reconciling the World to himself*, and accessible to the vilest and most provoking Sinner, who comes to him in the great Redeemer's Name, and in the Method established by the Gospel.

THE sinful Creature therefore, that *he may please GOD*, should solicit for Reconciliation

^e Rom. iii. 19.

^f John i. 18. John iii. 16.

^g Eph. i. 20, 21.

^h 2 Cor. v. 19.

in this prevailing Name. And that with Earnestness and Importunity, as one who cannot bear to be denied. He must look upon himself as guilty before GOD, and justly obnoxious to his Vengeance; as perishing and sinking down to Hell, and therefore wretched and forlorn, unless this *Mediator* stand his Friend, and undertake to reconcile him to GOD. He must have such Dread of what he has deserved, and such an humbling Conviction, that he hath most justly deserved it, as will render him willing upon any Terms to avoid it; ready to break out in Transports of Admiration, Gratitude and Praise, and receive and rely upon Christ in the Way prescribed by the Gospel. And having accepted Christ *as Mediator* between GOD and himself, and by such Acceptance obtained an Interest in his Merit and Recommendation, he may with humble Boldness throw himself before the Throne of Grace, and in his Name intreat Pardon and Favour.

THE vilest and most provoking Sinner may have Friendship with GOD, if he be truly willing to be saved from Sin and Wrath, and own himself indebted for so great a Benefit to *the Mediator*. And this Inclination being expressed, in an actual Acceptance of Christ, and Reliance on him, the believing Sinner may with humble Confidence draw nigh to GOD, and intreat this Blessing. And he should solicit for it, as what he values above all Things. His Estimation should be made appear by the *Earnestness of his Suit*; yet he should ask as one sensible that he is utterly unworthy of it, and therefore ask it only *in the Name* of Christ: And yet, being conscious to himself that he believes in Christ, and fully persuaded that he

SER. IX. hath purchased this great Benefit, and GOD hath promised it to all who believe, and therefore to himself; an humble Confidence in GOD should accompany his earnest Supplications to him. In this manner should the Friendship of GOD be solicited. And if in this manner, the vilest Sinner that ever was, would seek to be reconciled to GOD, he may assure himself he shall not seek in vain. And this is necessary that we may be capable of doing what shall please Him.

TILL Sinners are thus reconciled to him in *Christ*, neither their Persons nor their Services can be accepted. ⁱ *Through him* it is that we have Access to the Father. It is ^k *by Faith in him* that we can have any Access with Boldness and Confidence. And though when we have a great ^l *High Priest passed into Heaven for Us, and one who can be touched with our Infirmities*, we may come boldly to the Throne of Grace; yet can we in no Propriety be said to have such an High Priest, till he is made ours by believing Acceptance. Nor is it enough to accept him merely as our Priest and Sacrifice; we must submit to his Authority, and resign our selves to his Conduct and Direction, as well as trust to his Merits, if through him we would be reconciled to GOD. And thus we ^m *pass from Death to Life*; from a State of Enmity to a State of Friendship; from a State in which ⁿ *we cannot please GOD*, into a State wherein we shall be highly pleasing to him through Christ: In which he will not only accept but approve us;

ⁱ Eph. ii. 18.

^k Eph. iii. 12.

^l Heb. iv. 14, 15, 16.

^m John v. 24.

ⁿ Rom. viii. 8.

not only approve us, but take Complacency in us, and *delight to do us good.* SER. IX.

2. *Secondly*, We must forsake our own Course, and turn into GOD's Way, if we would please him. To *Faith* in Christ we must join *sincere Repentance* for Sin. These Duties have the closest Connection with each other, and are perpetual and inseparable Companions. The Apostle *testified both together*, to *Jews and Greeks*. And how can we be made sensible, how much we need a Saviour, without being convinced of the Evil and Demerit of Sin? How can we heartily receive a Saviour, without renouncing and quitting our Sins? Can we expect he should plead the Merit of his Sufferings, for such as reject his Commands, *and will not have him to reign over them*? Would he allow this to be Faith in him? Would he not rather take it as a renewed Affront? Doth not this Behaviour carry in it a plain Intimation, that he will license and Authorize our Rebellion against GOD? For this is the true State of the Case, if he will procure the Favour of GOD for us whilst we remain Impenitent. And what can be a more shocking Absurdity than this? Repentance must therefore ever accompany a sincere Reception of Christ as our Saviour and LORD.

AND the very Spirit and Soul of Repentance lies in the Turn of our Mind from the Creature and Sin to GOD and Holiness, which must be made manifest by forsaking *our wicked Ways*, and following *the Path of GOD's Commandments*. Indeed, *Sense of Sin, Grief and Shame* for Sin, *Self-Condemnations* and Re-

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proaches, humble and contrite, free and ingenuous Confession of Sin, ever precede or go along with our peremptory Purposes of leaving it: But till we come up to these fixed Resolutions against Sin, all Sin without Exception or Reserve, we are not real Penitents. Nay, should our Purposes against Sin fail of being executed, we should be still short of that Repentance which is genuine, and will entitle to Pardon. We must ^p cease to do Evil, and learn to do well. ^q The Wicked must forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and return to the LORD, if he would partake of his Mercy and obtain a Pardon. He only who ^r confesseth and forsaketh Sin shall obtain Mercy. So that there must be a Change from what the Sinner was, both in Heart and Life, in Purpose and Pursuit, before he can please GOD. It must be his hearty Purpose to turn from every Sin to GOD, before he can be accepted at all, and this Purpose must be put in Execution and continually pursued, if he would have the Favour continued.

To expect this on lower Terms, were to deceive one's self, and quite *mistake or pervert* the Tenor and Design of the Gospel. What else means the Apostle, by our being ^s buried with Christ into Death, that like as he was raised from the Dead by the Power of the Father, we also should walk with him in Newness of Life. What by his Charge, that we should ^t reckon our selves dead to Sin and alive to GOD, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord? What by our being

^p Esai. i. 16, 17.^q Esai. lv. 7.^r Prov. xxviii. 13.^s Rom. vi. 4.^t Verse 11.

"made free from Sin, and becoming the Servants SER. IX.
of GOD? What, by ^x putting off the old Man, and putting on the new, and being renewed in the Spirit of our Minds? What can the Apostle mean by such Expressions, less than a thorough Change of Heart and Life? And this is insisted upon not as Matter of mere Counsel and Advice, but as the very Terms of our Acceptance with GOD? There is no Hope of Favour from Him, no, not though Christ has shed his most precious Blood to make Atonement for Sin, if we remain Rebels against Him. Though he is *rich in Mercy* towards Sinners, the most provoking Sinners that are penitent, yet can he not be reconciled to such as are obstinate in Sin, and will persist in their Impenitency, in spite of all the dreadful Threatnings of his Law, and melting Invitations of his Grace.

BUT when we have quitted and renounced our Sins, and are entred into the way of Holiness, we are actually in Friendship with GOD. And what is farther necessary to be done by us, after we are in a State of Acceptance, that we may please GOD, will lie before you in the following Particulars. Wherefore,

III. *Thirdly*, WE must live with GOD, if we would act so as to please Him. It is the Bent and Concern of a rebellious and sinful Mind, to live away from GOD. He bids ^v GOD depart from him, for that he desires not the Knowledge of his Ways. He affects ^z to live without GOD in the World. And this is an Act of the most flagrant Disesteem and Contempt,

^u Rom. vi. 22.

^x Eph. iv. 22, 23, 24.

^y Job xxi. 14.

^z Eph. ii. 12.

SER. IX. it is offering the utmost Indignity to GOD, and can't fail of provoking him to the last Degree. Such as would please him must be of a quite different Spirit and Carriage, and love to live and ^a *walk with GOD.* Which implies two Things more especially,

I. *First*, LIVING in the continual Sense of his Presence. Nothing is more plainly asserted concerning GOD in Scripture, than that he is omnipresent, or *every where.* ^b *Whither shalt I go, saith David, from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy Presence? If I ascend up to Heaven thou art there, if I make my Bed in Hell, behold thou art there! If I take the Wings of the Morning, and dwell in the uttermost Parts of the Sea, even there shall thine Hand lead me, and thy Right-Hand shall hold me, i. e. I am under thine Eye, and in thy Reach.* And to be impressed with a deep Sense of this Truth, must have a mighty Influence towards our being truly religious. For what a Restraint must it be from Evil, to remember we are under the Eye of GOD? How powerfully must it prompt us to Obedience, to consider we are observed by our supreme Ruler, and always in his Presence? For it must be remembered, that the Omnipresence of GOD must include Omniscience too. Where-ever He is, He is the same, and therefore wise and knowing every where. The Psalmist therefore immediately subjoins to what is quoted above, ^c *If I say surely the Darkeness shall cover me, even the Night shall be Light about me. The Darkeness hideth not from thee, but the Night shineth as the Day.* Dark-

^a Gen. v. 24.^b Psal. cxxxix. 7—10.^c Ver. 11, 12.

ness and Light are alike to thee. Nor do our SER. IX. overt Acts, as they are called, only fall under the divine Cognizance, such I mean as are, or may be, known to our Fellow-Creatures. He is not only *acquainted with all our Ways*, and perfectly knows every Word we utter, but he ^d *understands our Thoughts*, and that far off, or long before they are conceived by us.

Now, as this Consideration should strike the Mind with Awe, and mightily enforce Duty, and restrain from Sin; so it must give Pleasure to all who are reconciled to GOD, and in a State of Friendship with Him. We are fond of the Presence and Company of those we love: And to avoid the Society of any, or be uneasy in it, is a sure Mark of Indifferency, if not of Aversion. And we can never *walk so as to please GOD*, whilst we do any Thing that implies settled Indifferency towards Him, or Aversion from Him. It is the Privilege of those whom he ennobles with the Title of Friends, that they may have his Presence in all Places, and at all Times. And is it any Proof of Affection to be indifferent to this Presence? Or when they may live with GOD, to be regardless of this Privilege, and affect to live without Him? *David's Behaviour* was very contrary to this. *I have set the LORD*, saith he, *always before me; because he is at my Right-Hand, I shall not be moved.* So that when he makes Enquiry in the fore-quoted Passage, *Whither shall I go from thy Presence*, it is not the Enquiry of one willing to withdraw from GOD. All who have the Spirit of *David*, love to live under his Inspection, and in his Pre-

^d Psalm cxxxix. 2.

^e Psalm xvi. 8.

sence.

SER. IX. fence. 'Tis their best Security from all Sin and Harm: From whatever can defile or hurt them. And would we take the proper Way to please Him, we should endeavour to have our Minds continually impressed with a Sense of his Presence, and shew thereby, how strong an Inclination we have to live always with Him. His Presence is the greatest Privilege of his People, the very Spring of their Felicity. But living with GOD implies,

II. *Secondly, LIVING in Intimacy with Him.* Every one truly reconciled to GOD, looks on a State of Distance from him, and Disaffection to him, as most dismal and destitute. A Soul without GOD is quite waste and desolate: But he values Friendship with GOD, as the Source and Substance of his Happiness. To *live in the Love of GOD*, in the mutual Interchanges of this Affection between GOD and Him, how relishing is it! The Perfection of such a Life is Heaven. Now such is the great Good-will of GOD to Sinners reconciled, that he not only will admit the Tender of their Devotions, but encourage them to make such a Tender, by giving them a Prospects of Returns of Love. Nay, he hath appointed Means and Seasons for stated Converse with Him, where, if we attend in a fit Manner, we may be sure to meet him, and have a kind and friendly Visit from Him.

AND *living with GOD* implies our keeping up an Intimacy with him, by these appointed Means. When he bids us ^f *seek his Face*, our Hearts should readily reply, *Thy Face LORD will we seek.* And then we take the proper

^f Psalm xxvii. 8.

way to please Him, when we diligently attend SER. IX. these Means, and when during this Attendance our ^s Souls follow hard after Him, and cannot go away contented without being favoured with Communion with Him. If the ^h Tabernacles of GOD are amiable to us : If one Day in his Courts be better than a Thousand : If we can prefer the meanest Station in his House to all the Tents or Palaces of Wickedness : If we find our principal Pleasure in waiting on GOD upon his Day, and in the holy Exercises of Religion : If when we may enjoy these Seasons, we can, with great Contentment, want the Wealth and Honours, and Delights of Worldlings ; but if we want them, can't enjoy our selves, no not in the Affluence of all earthly Things : These are convincing Proofs, that we esteem the Friendship of our GOD, that we prefer his Love and Favour, and Communion with him, to every Thing besides.

AND to live in the daily Exercises of such a Friendship, is indeed to live with GOD. It is the proper Method to improve our Love to Him, and our Confidence in Him : To endear Him more and more to our Souls, and render us fit Objects of divine Complacency. The more we use our selves to such a way of living, the more we border on the heavenly State, where happy Souls live ever with the LORD, live in a Manner in his Bosom, and under the immediate Influence of his quickning and chearing Beams. It is the best way to feel the Presence of GOD with us, and taste the Comforts of it. His *Essential Presence* may consist with Dislike and Displeasure. Thus He may be pre-

^s Psalm lxi. 8.

^h Psalm lxxxiv. 1, 10.

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sent with the Objects of his Vengeance. But to enjoy his friendly Presence: *Toⁱ taste that he is gracious*: To have sweet ^k *Communion or Fellowship with Him*, is the most joyful Part of the Christian's Life, and the best Evidence of his peculiar Love. And to value and affect such a Life, to be glad of such Intercourse, or eager to enjoy it: To attend with Diligence on the proper Means, and whilst we attend, to make it our hearty Endeavour to see and enjoy GOD, are proper Evidences of hearty Love to GOD, and one Method by which we must endeavour to please Him, and through Christ recommend our selves to his Acceptance. Again,

IV. *Fourthly*, WE should *live upon GOD*, if we would act *so as to please Him*. It is the peculiar Glory of GOD, that He is a Being by Himself: Sufficient to himself, and altogether Independent. In Him is the Fulness of Being and Life, because all besides his own is derived from Him. And whatsoever is thus derived, must be in continual Dependence on Him. The Condition of every Creature is, and must be poor and dependent. Inanimate Beings are thus dependent, though they know it not; and rational and conscious Beings should be so with free and full Consent. Nothing is more unnatural, a greater Evidence of monstrous Pride, than for such a Being to affect Independency from GOD. Nor can any thing be more provoking to GOD. It is touching Him in Point of Prerogative. It is injuring him in a Matter wherein his Honour is most deeply concerned. From whence we may conclude, that the oppo-

ⁱ 1 Pet. ii. 3.^k 1 John i. 3.

site Behaviour is highly pleasing to Him. In ^{SER. IX.} this Situation Things are as they should be. There is an evident Decency in the voluntary Dependence of a reasonable Being on his Maker. He acts agreeably to his Nature, his State, and the natural Relation between GOD and Him. Such a Conduct sound Reason must ever approve, and pronounce it fit, and comely, and commendable. Such a Judgment therefore must the GOD of Wisdom, (who even in the Language of the Philosopher is *adulta Ratio*, or Reason in its highest Perfection) pass upon it.

AND the more extensive and absolute this Dependence is, by so much the more is it to be approved and commended. He who has no Being or Power in and from Himself, (as none has but GOD) must ever be indigent and empty, but as he is continually supplied and filled up by Communications from the original Being. And the more sensible a rational Creature is of this Emptiness and Indigence, and the more free to make Acknowledgment of it, and the more disposed to live in a manner agreeable to these Acknowledgments, the more doth he act like himself, the more decently doth he carry it towards GOD, and the more worthy, or fit (for I mean no more by it) is he in all Respects to be accepted of Him.

IN such full Dependence do the holy Angels and the perfected *Spirits of the Just*, live above. And such a State of full Dependence, every real Saint is wishing for, and reaching at, whilst here below. He is not, indeed, perfectly cured, whilst here on Earth, of all his hereditary Pride and Self-sufficiency; but he bewails the least Remainders of it. They are his Burthen,
and

SER. IX. and daily give him great Uneasiness. He would willingly stand indebted to GOD for his All, derive it from Him, and live upon him as the Fountain of his Being, Life and Bliss. This is the natural Language of Prayer and Thanksgiving, which, when performed in a due and spiritual Manner, are the most genuine Indications of a renewed Heart and Nature; ¹ *Behold he prayeth.* And how vast a Compass do these Duties take? ^m *In all Things by Prayer and Supplication with Thanksgiving, let your Requests be made known to GOD.* All our good Things come from GOD. ⁿ *Every good and perfect Gift is from above, and cometh down from GOD;* and Prayer is the Mean and Instrument by which it must be derived upon us. By it we confess our Dependence upon GOD, and become Partakers of his Immense and over-flowing Fullness. And how constant our Dependence should be, is plainly intimated to Us, when we are required to ^o *pray always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and watch thereunto with all Perseverance.* Which is elsewhere expressed by ^p *praying without ceasing.*

NOT that we must be ever on our Knees, always employ'd in immediate Addresses to GOD; this would turn all the Duties of Religion into one. But we are often to be in such religious Exercises, we are to live always in Dependence upon GOD, which is a *virtual Prayer*. This Sense the Command will fairly bear, in this Sense the Duty commanded is rea-

¹ Acts ix. 11.

^m Phil. iv. 4.

ⁿ James i. 17.

^o Eph. vi. 18.

^p 1 Theff. v. 17.

sonable in it self, and well consistent with the SER. IX. other Parts of practical Religion.

WE are therefore at all Times, and in all Things, dependent upon GOD. And we cannot act *so as to please him*, if we do not readily and chearfully own it, and endeavour to carry it towards Him as becomes such needy and dependent Beings. This is what I mean by living upon GOD. It is living on his *Bounty*, and on *Himself*.

To his Beneficence we are indebted for all the good Things of this Life. And we should be content and pleased to be his Debtors. This hath ever been the Disposition of the best of Men. *¶ If GOD will give me Food to eat, and Raiment to put on, saith Jacob, He shall be my GOD.* Thus also the afflicted *Job*, when stript at once of all the Comforts of Life, The *LORD hath given, and the LORD hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the LORD.* And our blessed Saviour, in his most perfect Summary of our Requests, directs us to beg of GOD *our daily Bread.* In Him we are to trust for all we want. To Him, we are to pay our Thanks for all we have. And with his wise Allotments we must be contented, leaving it to him to judge, in what Measure these good Things shall be afforded to us.

To his Grace we are indebted for our spiritual Life. He is the Spring whence this must be at first derived, and whence we must continue to derive it, whilst we live. Indeed, this is not immediately to be derived from GOD the Father, to whom the Title GOD is emi-

¶ Gen. xxviii. 20, 21. ¶ Job i. 21. ¶ Matth. vi. 11.

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hath Life in Himself, he hath given to his Son to have Life in himself, and hath treasured up in him all the Treasures of Wisdom and Grace, to answer the Purposes of redeeming Mercy. And it is from Him we must more immediately derive the spiritual Life. 'Tis by Faith in Him we first become Partakers of these quickening Influences; and it is by Acts of Faith in him repeated daily, that we continue still ^u to receive of his Fulness, and Grace for Grace. Hence he is termed in holy Scripture our Life. ^x When Christ who is our Life shall appear. To the same Purpose saith the Apostle Paul, ^y I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.

NOR is it most immediately from Christ that we derive these gracious Influences. They are imparted to us by his holy Spirit. By this Spirit, *are the ^z Children of GOD led. Through him, they are enabled ^a to mortify the Deeds of the Body. This is called the Spirit of GOD dwelling in them, and the Spirit of Christ; without having it we can be none of his. And, because he is called the Spirit of Christ, and said to dwell in us, therefore is it also exprest, ^b if Christ be in us, viz. by his holy Spirit, the Body is dead because of Sin, but the Spirit is Life because of Righteousness.*

UPON the whole however it is evident, that we must depend upon GOD for spiritual Life. On GOD the Father ultimately, who hath treasured up this Life in his Son: On

^c John v. 26.^u John i. 16.^x Col. iii. 4.^y Gal. ii. 20.^z Rom. viii. 14.^a Verse 13.^b Verse 10.

GOD the Son more *immediately*, who dispenses SER. IX. this Treasure by his holy Spirit: But *most immediately* on GOD the holy Spirit, by whose Influences and Operations the spiritual Life is at first begun, and afterwards maintained and carried forward to Perfection. Without him we can do nothing. No not so much ^c as think a good Thought. All our Sufficiency of this Kind is of GOD. And unless we live in Dependence upon GOD, for constant needful Supplies of this Sort, we cannot please Him. To live deriving all our Supplies of natural Life from him, is to own him for our Maker and Preserver: But to be expecting Pardon of daily Sins from Him, and Communications of spiritual Life, is to own him for our Redeemer and Saviour; and shall we not be very deficient in our Duty, and much displease Him, if we do not give him the Honour of our Salvation?

BUT there is yet a farther Sense, wherein we must be daily *living upon GOD*. He is the very Life of Spirits. ^d His loving Kindness is better than Life. It is the very Life of Life, to a Soul that hath renewed Acquaintance with GOD. Without enjoying this he can take no Pleasure in the most ample Possessions, or most delicious Fruitions of this Life. Honour is but a Shade, and Wealth a Load, and all the Pleasures of Life insipid and distastful without it. Others may be clamouring for worldly Good, but what he values and wishes for is, that *the* ^e Light of GOD's Countenance may be lifted up on his Soul, that it may be compassed with his

^c 2 Cor. iii. 5. ^d Psalm lxiii. 3. ^e Psalm iv. 6, 7.

SER. IX. Favour, and refreshed and cheered with his Smiles. ^f *There is none in Heaven but GOD, and none upon the Earth that he desires besides him, i. e. separate from GOD, whilst himself continues in a State of Distance and Alienation from Him. And that Mind alone thinks justly and honourably of the blessed GOD who makes this Choice, and is with strong and constant Inclination carried towards Him as its Rest, and lives upon him as the Spring of its Felicity. In short, till the Soul comes to be in Love with GOD, to love him with a pure and lively Flame, and to a superlative Degree; till it doth, at least in rational Estimation and Choice, prefer Him infinitely to all created Beings, it cannot be an Object of divine Complacency, or in other Words, cannot please GOD. But every Soul that loves GOD with all its Heart and Might, will naturally live with Him, and live upon Him as its Portion and Rest. Whatever Avocations it may have, yet Love, like the gravitating Principle in Bodies, will fix it in a strong and constant Inclination towards GOD as its Center. Again,*

V. Fifthly, WE must live in constant and cheerful Subjection to his Authority, if we would please GOD. He is our rightful Sovereign, and that upon the fullest Claim. We are the Creatures of his Power, and every such Being is born a Subject to his Laws, if by Nature it be capable of proper Government. All Power and Authority are originally in Him. Every Thing of this Kind among the Creatures is delegated and derived. For which Reason GOD

is termed in Scripture, the *8 blessed and only* SER. IX.
Potentate, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.
He only hath Command unlimited and unde-
rived, and his is properly such. That of all
other Beings is at once borrowed and confined.
It must be exercised according to his Direction,
and not merely as they please, who are entrust-
ed with it. But he can be controlled and li-
mited by no Will but his own. All other Po-
tentates are accountable to Him, but he owes
no Account to any. And his Authority ex-
tends not only to Words and outward Acts,
but to the hidden Sentiments and Inclinations
of the Soul. These are all within his Cogni-
zance, and therefore under his Control and
Command. Nay his Authority doth more
immediately take hold on them. And Words
and overt Actions seem therefore to come un-
der the Regulation of his Laws, because they
are proper Signs of the Thoughts and Inclina-
tions of the Mind. However his Government
extends to all our mental Powers, and his Laws
claim the Regulation of their Operations and
Habits.

N o w that we *may walk so as to please*
GOD, it is necessary we should own his Au-
thority in its full Extent, and heartily subject
our selves to it, and that not out of *Constraint*,
but willingly and with Pleasure. And this should
be done, with full Conviction on our Minds,
that it ought to be done, and that we shall not
act like reasonable Beings, nor consult or pur-
sue our own Interests without doing it; and
that in the most full and unreserved Manner,

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without excepting against his Command in any Particular, or so much as wishing to be excused from any one Obligation he is pleased to lay upon Us. We should esteem it better in all Respects to be at his Command, than to be left in our own Power. And, with this Conviction full upon our Minds, should we yield our selves up to Him, and set our selves with Diligence and Pleasure to enquire, from his Word, what his *good and acceptable Will*, as to our Behaviour, is, both internal and external, the Acts of the Body and the Thoughts, Affections, Inclinations, Purposes and all the Operations of the Mind, regarding either GOD, our selves or Fellow-Creatures. For the Obligations of the Law of GOD extends to all these Particulars.

AND to our Endeavours of this Kind must be added most importunate Prayers to GOD, for the Enlightnings of his holy Spirit. Thus did *David* act and pray, and his Example is left upon Record for our Imitation. ^h *I seek thy Precepts*, saith He. ⁱ *I have sought thy Precepts*. ^k *I will consider thy Testimonies*. ^l *I longed for thy Commandments*. And he gives it as the Character of the Wicked, that ^m *they seek not GOD's Statutes*. And as He made the Laws of GOD his Study, and the Subject of his pleasing Meditation, so he often puts up Prayers to GOD, for an enlightned Mind, that he might have the thorough and saving Knowledge of them. ⁿ *Teach me, oh LORD, the Way of thy Statutes*. *Give me Understanding*

^h Psalm cxix. 45.ⁱ Verse 94.^k Verse 95.^l Verse 131.^m Verse 135.ⁿ Verse 33, 34.

and I shall keep thy Law. ° Give me Understanding that I may learn thy Commandments. SER. IX.

Thus should we also turn over the holy Oracles, and thus call in the Help of GOD's holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth and Grace, that we may know *what is good, and what the LORD hath required from us.*

AND these Enquiries must be made, not, merely, to enlarge our Understandings or amuse our Minds, but for the Regulation of our Thoughts and Actions. We must therefore make it our sincere Endeavour, to conform our selves in all Things to his known Will, and avoid all those Thoughts, Words and Actions which his Laws forbid, and act, and speak, and think according to its Injunctions. In this Way we shall give Evidence that we are his willing Subjects. And without this we cannot hope to please Him, because without it, his Authority is not properly owned. And who can think GOD should ever take Pleasure in a reasonable Creature, that doth not own his Sovereignty over Him?

AND though our Duty and Performances, when we have done our best, will be very defective; yet must not this excuse us from sincere Endeavours, to know and do the Will of GOD. And he who on Pretence of these Defects, would hold Himself excused from such Endeavours, shews plain Dislike of GOD's Command, and cannot hope to please him, not though he should fasten with bold Reliance on a Saviour's Merits, to recommend him to GOD. He did not come into the World, to excuse

° Psalm cxix. 73.

° Mic. vi. 8.

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his Creatures from their Duty, but ¹ reduce them to it: Not to dispossess GOD of his Authority, but reinthrone him in the Hearts of such as had been Rebels against Him. But,

V. *Lastly, WE must live for the Glory and Honour of GOD, if we would walk so as to please Him.* This is the highest and worthiest End GOD could propose to himself in all he doth, and therefore the fittest for Him to propose. *He made ² all Things for Himself.* And the reasonable Creature can do nothing *more becoming*, than to fall in with his Maker's Design, and therefore to make the Glory of GOD his chief End and Pursuit. Herein created Wisdom echoes as it were to what is original and immense, and the Creature approves his Maker's Choice, and resigns to his unerring Conduct. And this with the highest Reason in the World. For when the Knowledge of GOD is perfect, and his Conduct infallible, it is an Instance of the greatest Wisdom in his Creatures, to be guided by his Elections, and fall in with his Designs. He ever acts in a Manner becoming Him, and cannot act otherwise, and when the Creature concurs with his Purposes, he takes the most proper Method to recommend himself to the Favour of GOD. In conforming himself thus to the Purposes of GOD, he shews the highest Deference to his Maker, and at the same time acts as best becomes Himself, and what has a direct Tendency to his own Honour. For nothing can more ennoble a Creature than to act for the most worthy and noble Ends, and those must be the

¹ Matth. i. 21. Tit. ii. 14.² Prov. xvi. 4.

most worthy and noble which fall in with the Intentions of GOD. And such a Conduct must on both Accounts be pleasing to GOD. As it speaks the utmost Deference to Himself, and as it tends to put a Dignity on his Creature. For even this, when his own Honour is secured, is a Thing pleasing to GOD. *Those that honour Me, will I honour.* So that we must live to the Glory of GOD, if we would walk so as to please Him. And this implies two Things.

I. *First*, THAT the Honour of GOD, should be preferred by us to all our own Interests. Indeed GOD can receive no new Honour from his Creatures, or more than he hath originally and unchangeably in Himself. To imagine we can do any thing to render him more honourable than he is, were the greatest Absurdity, and the most provoking Affront. At best we can only acknowledge him to be glorious and honourable in Himself, but how glorious and honourable we must despair of acknowledging. Proper Acknowledgment is only the Profession of our Knowledge and Convictions. But our Knowledge is that of finite Beings, of an inferior Rank of finite Beings, and therefore must come infinitely short of the divine Glories, which are properly infinite. *How little a Portion do we hear of Him?* When GOD therefore speaks of being honoured by us, it is not to be understood of conferring new Honours on Him. But when we think, and act, and speak what is most agreeable to our just Notions of him, and hath a Tendency to re-

¹ 1 Sam. ii. 20.

¹ Job xxvi. 14.

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commend him to the Regard and Veneration of our Fellow-Creatures, he is pleased to account it doing Honour to Him. And this is what we should prefer to all Interests of ours.

I do not carry this indeed, the Length that some have done, and tell you, that for the Honour of GOD, you should be willing to renounce all your spiritual and eternal Interests, and contentedly be damned. GOD binds no such heavy Burthens on Us. For though abstractively considered his Honour is preferable to all our Interests, and therefore should have an higher Regard in our rational Valuation, GOD hath not separated his Honour from our highest Interests. He has joined them Himself, and has required Us to pursue them in Conjunction. And to honour GOD to the uttermost, has inseparable Connexion with our highest Happiness. The greater our Esteem of GOD is, the more honourable Thoughts we form of Him, and the more closely we act up to these Sentiments, the better we know Him, and the more Delight must we have in Him; and herein strictly speaking human Happiness consists. And could we perfectly drop all Regard to our selves, and let a Concern for the Glory of GOD swallow up our Souls, we should not lessen our Happiness thereby, but perhaps improve it.

BUT all inferior and worldly Interests are to be much postponed to the Honour of GOD. They must not be allowed to come in Competition with it. No Motive or Consideration of this Kind, should prevail with us to do any Thing that may dishonour GOD. Neither the *Prospect* of Advantage, nor the *Fear* of Loss.

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We should neither be bribed nor terrified into SER. IX. it. No, not by the highest Offers the World can make, nor the most frightful Threatnings it can use. We must give up all worldly Interests, we must be ready to part with our Lives, rather than do any thing we are persuaded will dishonour GOD. For whatever we would preserve at the Expence of his Honour, we manifestly prefer before it. If therefore to procure any worldly Good, or avoid any worldly Inconvenience, Loss, or Suffering, we wilfully dishonour GOD, we plainly prefer our worldly *Ease*, or *Safety*, or *Interests* before his Honour. Which must be highly displeasing; because he Himself prefers his Honour to all Interests of ours, and it is every way fit and becoming for Him so to do, and for us to do it after his Example.

Now GOD may be dishonoured by us several ways. As when we frame Notions unworthy of Him, and such as derogate from the high Perfections and transcendent Excellencies of his Nature: When we speak any thing that may lessen Him in the Esteem of our Fellow-Creatures, nay, when we speak of Him at all without a becoming Veneration for Him in our Minds at the same time. Nay, Actions have a Language as significant as Words. And therefore to do any thing in wilful Opposition to his Command, or thoughtless Neglect of it, is acting to his Dishonour. For this Contradiction to divine Command, carries in it Neglect, if not Contempt of his Authority. And how dishonourable is it to GOD to represent his high Command as vile and contemptible? Fit to be slighted and despised, or at least not worthy to be regarded? The same is to be said if we renounce

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nounce any Truth which he hath revealed, and laid us under an Obligation to believe and profess: For this is to charge him with Falshood, and act in Disobedience to his Will. Nay, not to act at all, when we are under the strongest Obligations to it, both out of Regard to the Command of GOD, and that Veneration and Esteem we ought to have for such a Being, must also be dishonourable to Him. And this is the Case, when we neglect or refuse to render that Worship and Homage, which are due upon the Account of the Excellencies of his Nature, or by his positive Command. Or when this is done in a slight and careless Manner, altogether unbecoming those honourable and exalted Thoughts, which we should always form of Him.

Now rather than act in these Instances, or any like them, to the Dishonour of GOD, we should be content to sacrifice our Ease, our Reputation, our worldly Wealth, nay, and our very Lives: To suffer any Loss, or undergo any Pain or Torture. I mean rather than do any such Thing with Knowledge and Deliberation. For thus our Saviour hath determined the Point. *"He that loveth Father, or Mother, or Son, or Daughter, more than Me, is not worthy of Me.* And the Expressions are yet stronger in another Passage. ** If any Man come to me and hate not his Father, and Mother, and Wife, and Children, and Brethren, and Sisters, yea, and his own Life also, he cannot be my Disciple.* Strange Passage indeed at the first Sound! What doth the Son of GOD so full

^u Matth. x. 37.

^{*} Luke xiv. 26.

of Love, and Tenderneſs, and Compaſſion Him-
ſelf, yet bind his Followers to be cruel and un-
natural! To hate their neareſt Relations and
deareſt Friends, and tear up from their Hearts
that Principle which is moſt deeply rooted there
by Nature, that of *Self-Preſervation*! No,
the Hatred intended is not to be taken in an
Absolute, but *Comparative Senſe*. What he af-
terwards ſaith in the ſame Chapter, will help us
into his Meaning here. *Whoſoever he be of you
that forſaketh not all he hath, he cannot be my
Disciple*. Meaning upon a juſt Occaſion and
Call. And then certainly there is a juſt Call
to forſake all we have, when we cannot hold
it without diſhonouring GOD. For the Ho-
nour of GOD in any one Inſtance, as I have
ſhewn above, is in it ſelf preferable to all our
Interests, and ſhould be preferred by Us.

II. *Secondly*, LIVING to the Honour of
GOD, implies that we ſhould *make his Glory
the great Scope and End of all our Actions*.
This, as I have ſhewn you, is the End which
GOD propoſes to Himſelf, and in this Deſign
he ſhould have our Concurrence. We ſhould,
within our Sphere of Action, fall in with
Him, and purſue the ſame Purpoſe. And this
not only in Acts of Religion, more ſtrictly ſo
called, wherein we do immediate Homage to
GOD, by offering up our Worſhip to Him:
But in the common Acts of Life, whether they
relate to *civil Affairs*, or *domestic* and meer bo-
dily Concerns. *Whether we eat or drink, or
whatſoever we do, all ſhould be done to the Glory
of GOD*. To this it ſhould be referred as the
ultimate End.

¹ Luke xiv. 33.

² 1 Cor. x. 31.

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INDEED we may have inferior Views also, in Matters relating to our Bodies, and the Concerns of Civil Life: We may act as *Members of a Community*, with a Regard to the common Interests of it. We may propose Gain and Advantage to our selves and Families, by Traffic, or other worldly Business. We may in eating and drinking propose the sober Gratification of our Appetites, the stilling the Importunity of Hunger and Thirst, the Health and Nourishment of our Bodies, and the Prolongation of Life. But then these should be all *subordinate Ends*, and not the last and principal Thing in View. The Glory of GOD should be the highest Thing in our Esteem, and the last in our Purpose and Design in all. So that every Thing we do should have *final*, though not *immediate Reference* to this, and terminate directly here. Thus our LORD Jesus himself acted as Mediator. ^a *I have glorified Thee.* And though he did ask it of his Father, that Himself might be glorified, yet was it not principally for his own sake. ^b *Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify Thee.*

AND that we may pursue this Design more effectually in the General, it will be requisite that we endeavour to make this the Scope and Intention of every particular Thing we do. That in our worldly Business, our mutual Converses, our daily Meals, and all the proper Acts of our several Stations, as well as in our religious Performances, we may, *as much as possible*, have express Regard to the Glory of GOD,

^a John xvii. 4.^b Verse 1.

and be able to say we are doing this for Him. SER. IX.

What an Elevation would this give our Minds, how careful would it make us to do Nothing, either as to Matter or Manner, that will offend GOD? And how direct a Tendency must this Conduct have to please Him? For by acting at this rate, we are directly pursuing the very same End with Himself. And if he be pleased with himself in the Prosecution of the most worthy and excellent Purposes, he cannot but be pleased to see his Creatures engaged in the same Design, and acting just the Counterpart to what he Himself is doing. By such Concurrence they *approve*, they *applaud* their Maker's Conduct, and loudly proclaim it worthy of their Imitation. He can, indeed, receive no real Advantage from their Approbations or Applauses, nor suffer Damage by their Contradiction to Him. But, as he is pleased with Himself for acting in a Manner *becoming Him*, so speaking after the Manner of Men (and the Great GOD often condescends to talk to us in our own Language) he must have some Pleasure in those Acts of his Creatures which *become them*, and therefore become them because they concur with what He, who is at the Head of all thinking and intelligent Being, is doing Himself.

AND thus have I gone briefly thorow our *second Enquiry*, and shewn how we must *walk and please GOD*. Our next Enquiry is, *how the Thessalonians might be said to have received any thing to this Purpose from the Apostles*, and *might know they were under Obligations to regard it*? Which will be the Subject of my next Discourse.



*The Obligation of Christians to walk
according to Apostolical Direction.*

S E R M O N II.

ON THESSAL. IV. I.

Furthermore, Brethren, we beseech and exhort you by our LORD Jesus Christ, that as ye have received of us, how ye ought to walk and please GOD, so ye would abound therein more and more.

Proceed now in the third Place,

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III. To shew in what Manner the *Thessalonians* had received from the Apostles how they ought to walk, and how they were obliged to comply with it. And this you see is a double Enquiry.

I. *First,*

I. *First, IN what manner they had received any thing from the Apostles to this Purpose?*

II. *Secondly, How they were brought under Obligations to comply with it?* For, as I observed before, the Expression is strong. *As ye have received how ye ought to walk and please GOD.* To each of these I shall give a distinct Answer, and begin with the

I. *First, IN what Manner had they received from the Apostle, how they ought to walk and please GOD.* It is plain that the Apostle is here speaking to them about Duty, and what related to the Conduct of Life. He must therefore refer in this Expression, to some Instructions and Advices, some Laws and Rules that had been communicated to the *Thessalonians* on this Head, either by *Himself* or *Others*, that were sent out upon the same Errand, and acted by the same Authority. It is probable that both He and Others, who were Fellow-Travellers as well as Fellow-Labourers with Him, had communicated several Things of this Kind to the Saints at *Thessalonica*; though Himself as the *Apostle of the Gentiles* had been Principal herein. Certain it is that where-ever the Apostles and primitive Ministers preached *Jesus Christ the LORD*; they not only spread and explained the Doctrines of Christianity, and invited Men to partake of its Privileges, but they also laid before Them a *Plan for their Conduct*, and a Body of Rules by which they were to form their Spirits, Lives and Manners, and let them know the Obligations they were under to act accordingly. We have an Account of some of their Proceedings of this Kind in
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the Acts of the Apostles. *Paul* not only preached *Jesus and the Resurrection* at *Athens*, but inveigh'd against their Idolatry and Superstitions, and urged them to Repentance by the Expectation of a future Judgment. He tells the Church at *Ephesus*, that *he had kept back nothing profitable for them, but had taught them publickly, and from House to House, testifying to them Repentance towards GOD, and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ*. And if we may make a Judgment of the *Sermons* of this Apostle by his *Epistles*, great Part of them was certainly taken up in laying Rules for their Conduct before his Hearers, and pressing them to comply with them. For there is not one of his *Epistles*, but abounds with such Rules.

AND had these been omitted by him, he could not have been faithful to his Trust, but must have kept back from them, not only what was profitable, but what was absolutely necessary for them; Practice being a very essential Part of true and acceptable Religion. Doctrines are not delivered for their own Sake merely, but that they may be laid as a Foundation for a suitable Behaviour, in all who believe and profess them.

IT must therefore be taken for granted, that the Apostles and primitive Ministers did teach the People *how to walk and please GOD*. And whether this were done in publick Discourses or private Conversation, by Word of Mouth or by Writing, thus was delivered to them a Plan for their Conduct and Behaviour. And what was thus delivered to them, they are said here to have received. And they had received it in

the properest Sense, when they had clear Conceptions and a thorough Understanding, of what the Apostles taught to this Purpose. But tho' they had not taken in the Sense and full Meaning of what was taught them, yet since it was plainly and faithfully communicated by these Ministers, they might be said to have received it. For tho' they had not heard them with as much Attention and Regard as they might and ought, yet the Apostles had done their Duty, and committed a Talent to them, for which they would be accountable to the great GOD, and therefore might be properly said *to have received it.*

AND in this Sense, the Advice here given would reach all at *Thessalonica*, who had been Auditors of the Apostle or his Fellow-Labourers. Tho' they had not given Heed to their Instructions at the Time they were delivered, yet inasmuch, as the Apostle and his Assistants had done all that was in their Power, to convey the Knowledge of these Things to them, and they had a Talent committed to their Trust for Use and Improvement, he intimates to them in this Passage, that they were under Obligations *to walk and please GOD*, according to the Directions he had given them. Tho' they had given no Attention to them at the Time they were delivered, tho' they had paid no Regard to them in their Conversation since, tho' they might now have utterly forgotten them; yet were they heretofore and continued still under Obligation to conform themselves to them. They were never the less *bound to walk*, as he had given Direction, *and abound therein more and more.*

BUT the Advice is more peculiarly given to such as had attended to what the Apostle taught,

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so as to take in its Sense, feel its Weight, and yield in some good Measure to its Authority. These Persons knew how *to walk and please GOD*. They had received it in the properest Sense, and are therefore more peculiarly advised to abound therein. The others were under plain Obligation to learn and practise what the Apostles taught. These had actually learnt it, and therefore were in a more fit and near Disposition to pursue the farther Advice here given, which is none other but to prosecute their former Purposes, and proceed as they had begun.

AND what the Apostle tells them here they had received, is the very same Thing that he means in his other Epistle, by the *Traditions* which he charges them ^b *to keep, whether they had been taught them by Word or by Letter*. It was ^c *Tradition*, as by the Apostle it was delivered to them. But it was the very same Thing which the Apostles *delivered*, and they *received*, viz. Rules for Life, directing them how they *ought walk and please GOD*. And as, according to our Apostle, a Tradition may be both *uttered* and *written*, committed to the Ear and to Paper too, so the *Thessalonians* might have received what the Apostle delivered in both these Ways. Certain it is, they did receive it both these Ways some Time or other, if they had not received it both Ways at the Time this Epistle was written. For *Paul* had preached to them before. He is now writing one Epistle to them, and he did afterward write another. Whether he did also, whilst he was

^b 2 Theff. ii. 15.

^c Παράδοσις from παραδίδωμι,

traditio from tradere, to deliver.

with

with them in Person, commit any Thing to Writing for their Direction, to which he might refer, as well as to what he had delivered *viva voce*, doth not appear. If this be utterly improbable, then his Meaning must be limited to what he had delivered by *Word of Mouth*, and they had heard from him; because this only could be spoken of, as what they had already received. Not but they would be under the same Obligations, to pay as much Regard to any Thing he was now delivering, or should hereafter deliver to them, of the same kind, in *Writing*.

AND this Matter is now I think sufficiently clear and plain, I mean, in what Manner the *Thessalonians* might have received from the Apostle, *how they ought to act and please GOD*, and how they actually had received it. *Paul* might have delivered this to them, both by Word and Writing. It is certain he did it by Word of Mouth; and thus they receiv'd it. All his Hearers at *Theffalonica* had received this, so far, as to bring themselves under Obligations to comply with the Rules he had delivered, especially those among them who had embraced the Christian Profession; but there were some who had so far received, what he delivered upon this Head, as to yield to the Force of this Obligation, and to them particularly he adds the Advice of *abounding in it more and more*.

II. Secondly, To enquire *how they were brought under Obligations to comply, with what they had thus received, and conform to these Rules of Life: As ye have received how ye ought to walk*. This carries in it an Air of Authority, and plainly signifies, that they were not left at Liberty, whe-

SERM. X. *whether they would follow the Apostolical Directions or no. But now, the Apostle had not assumed or claimed such Authority over the Thessalonians, or any other Church, in his own Name. He challenged only the Title and Character of a Minister, he claimed no higher Powers to himself than what were Ministerial. ^dNot that we have Dominion, saith he, over your Faith, but are Helpers of your Joy. Nor did he pretend to Lord it over the Practices of Christians, more than over their Faith. The Apostolical Commission ran no higher than to ^eteach Men what their common LORD had commanded: And his Commands they were to teach in the fullest and plainest Manner. It is in his Name the Apostle speaks thus to the Thessalonians. They had received from him and his Assistants, a plain Account, how the Head of the Church had required all his Subjects and Members, to walk and please GOD. And when he spoke to them of the Obligations they were under thus to walk, he is to be understood of Obligations, resulting from the Redeemer's Authority over them, and Commands to them. They were thus obliged by Virtue of the Discoveries he had made to them of their Sovereign's Pleasure.*

THERE can be no room to doubt, but the great Author of all Things must be LORD of all. And he who is Lord of all, must have Authority to prescribe to Rational Beings what Rules of Life he pleases. And his Pleasure being once signified, they must be concluded by it, and under the strongest Obligations to conform to it. Indeed it is not to be known by

mere Natural Light, that the Maker of the World is also the Saviour and Redeemer of lost Mankind. This is Matter of pure Revelation. But supposing such a Revelation once made, the Authority of the Redeemer must evidently appear to be as great as the Authority of the Creator, because they are the same. The Redeemer is also Creator of the World, and its Sovereign. It is by Virtue of his Authority, that the Apostle tells the *Theſſalonians*, they ought to walk as they had been taught by his Ministers. Not by Virtue of any Authority he himself had over them, more than what was *Ministerial*, viz. as he had a Commission from his LORD for the Apostolical Office, and was charged with a Message to Mankind from him.

So that the Enquiry under this Head will be reduced to this, viz. How the *Theſſalonians* were to be convinced and satisfied, *that what the Apostle and his Fellow-Labourers taught them about their Behaviour, was indeed the Will and Command of G O D, their Maker and Redeemer?* For this Point being made clear to them, it could be no Manner of Doubt whether they were under Obligation to act, agreeably to what they had received. And this Enquiry will have a satisfactory Answer, by attending to what follows. And

I. First, THE Apostle certainly pretended to come to them in the Name of Christ, and to act by a Commission received from him, in what he delivered to this Purpose. He plainly and expressly asserts as much, in this very Epistle. He tells them, that himself and they who laboured with him, had [†] *been bold to speak the Gospel*

[†] Theſſ. ii. 2.

SERM. X. *of GOD unto them. And when ^g they might have been burthensom to them as the Apostles of Christ, yet ^h labouring Night and Day, that they might not be chargeable to them, they preached unto them the Gospel of GOD. Nay he commends them, that ⁱ they received the Word of GOD, which they preached to them, not as the Word of Man, but, as indeed it was, the Word of GOD. From which Passages, and more that might be produced, it is evident that the Apostle spake to them in the Name of GOD, and pretended a Commission from Heaven for what he taught. He saith expressly, that he preached the Gospel of GOD to them: And he renders solemn Thanks to GOD, that they had paid Regard to what he taught, as to the Word of GOD, and not merely a Word of his own.*

THIS carries its own Evidence with it, that he thought himself, at least he would have the *Thessalonians* think, he acted in his Office by a Divine Commission: That he was an *Apostle* or extraordinary Messenger of GOD: That he was a Minister, or Servant of GOD, and employed by him when he preached to them. He commends them for accounting him such a Minister, and for paying Regard to him as such. And all this is done to keep up their Respect for Him, that they might continue to pay the same Regard to his Character and his Instructions. No one who reads this Epistle with Care can make a Doubt, whether the Apostle *Paul* did, in his former Ministry among the *Thessalonians*, and in this Epistle, endeavour to impress their Minds with this Sentiment concerning Himself, and his Exhortations.

^g 1 Thess. ii. 6.

^h Ver. 9.

ⁱ Ver. 13.

THE Question therefore is, How he made out these Pretensions? For it hath been too common a Practice for Men to pretend to Divine Commissions and Revelations. And very great Impostures have, more than once, past upon the World, at least upon a great Part of Mankind. Witness the Traditionary Fables of the *Jewish Talmudists*, and the *Romish Legendaries*, not to mention the *Mahometan* System of Religion. To clear the Matter therefore I observe,

II. Secondly, THAT the Apostle produced proper Vouchers, to support and make out these Pretensions. He did not expect they should take his bare Word for his Authority, and submit to it, without producing his Credentials and full Powers. To have acted thus, would have been a Stretch of his Power, and a Reflection upon his Master. No earthly Prince sends an Ambassador abroad, without an Authentick Instrument under his Hand and Seal, to ascertain his Character, and recommend him to the Regard of those, to whom he is sent. And is it to be imagined that the supreme Ruler would employ any one in *such an Office*, without putting his Credentials into his Hands, support his Character, and recommend him to the Regard of all to whom he was sent? Such an Omission must have destroyed the Authority of his Ministers, or have opened a Door to infinite Imposture. For upon this Supposition they must have been received as the Messengers of GOD, upon the Authority of their bare Word, without shewing their Commission for such an Office. And what Fence could there have been, against any Deceiver, upon this Foot? Unless it were utterly impossible in the Nature of the Thing, that an Impostor should

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W pretend a Commission from Heaven, and claim Regard in the Name of GOD. For if those who came in the Name of GOD were to shew no other Authority for it, but the Credit of their own Assertion, why should not every one, who had the Confidence to assert, he was a Messenger of GOD, have equal Credit? And how then should Imposture be prevented? But if *on the other Hand* Men were on the Guard against Deceit and Illusion, how could a Messenger from GOD gain Credit among them, and establish his Authority, *without any better Voucher* than his own Assertion?

WE take it for granted then, that GOD never acted a Part so destructive of his own Design, and therefore so unbecoming his infinite Wisdom, as to send any such a Minister to Men, without putting his Commission into his Hands, and furnishing him with Credentials sufficient to support his Character, and make out his Claims. And should any Minister from GOD have challenged the Title, and demanded the Respect and Credit of *an Ambassador* of his, without producing his Vouchers, he would have acted an unbecoming Part, and been wanting in just Concern for the Honour of his Master, whilst he arrogated too much to himself. For the very same Reasons, which I have urged to prove, that such extraordinary Ministers and Messengers from GOD to Men, should have sufficient Credentials to support their Character and Pretences, will also evince, that upon all proper Occasions, they should be produced.

NOW the Apostle did produce such Vouchers to support the Pretensions, which under the foregoing Head, I told you he made. He shewed

shewed them *how they ought to walk and please* SERM. X.
GOD. He pretended to do this in the Name
of GOD, and by a Revelation and Commis-
sion from Him. And he made it appear by suffi-
cient Evidence, that he had such a Commission.
This Evidence was his Voucher. And the
Force of this Evidence, I am to lay before you,
under a few Particulars, to make out the Truth
of what I assert. And here,

I. *First, His own personal Character and Con-
duct* carried some Conviction, *that his Pretensions
were well grounded.* That he was not a meer
Pretender to a divine Commission. He lived up
to those Rules, which he bound upon the Con-
sciences of others, by Divine Authority. For
this he makes an Appeal to themselves; ^k *Ye
are Witnesses, and GOD also, how holily and
justly, and unblameably we behaved our selves
among you that believe.* He did not bind heavy
Burthens to the Shoulders of others, to ease
his own: But acted himself as he required them
to act. And formed *his own* Life and Conduct
upon those Principles, and according to those
Rules which he laid down for *theirs*. At the
same Time he plainly made it appear, that he
was carrying on no Designs for his worldly In-
terest among them; but was acted in what he
did, by a pure and disinterested Zeal for the
Honour of his Master, and the Salvation of
their Souls. He never ^l insinuated into their
Affections by plausible Talk, by Fawning and
Flattery, nor covered any covetous Designs
with religious Pretences. He was so earnestly
desirous of their Salvation, that ^m *he could wil-*

^k 1 Thes. ii. 10.

^l Ver. 5.

^m Ver. 8, 9.

SERM. X. *lingly have imparted his own Soul to them, as well as the Gospel of GOD. He laboured Night and Day, because he would not be chargeable to them, ⁿtho' he might have been burthensome as an Apostle of Christ.*

NOW this his Conduct, for which he could appeal to the *Thessalonians* themselves, was a convincing Proof, that he *thought himself* such a Minister and Messenger from GOD, as he pretended to be. For there is nothing at all in this Conduct, that has the Face of Imposture, or so much as any of its Features. Nothing that has the Semblance of Trick and Design. It is all honest Simplicity and disinterested Zeal. Impostors may indeed put on a Shew of Virtue and Religion, but they have a farther End to serve by these Appearances; and therefore they wear them as a Disguise, and it is no difficult Thing for a quick Eye and a careful Observer, to see thro' it. For no Man wraps himself in it, but the more securely and successfully to pursue his selfish Designs. Either to procure himself a Name, and by that Means make himself great, or to advance his worldly Wealth, and raise himself to Honour and Power. But when a Man manifestly flights all little Interests of his own, and neglects all Artifice that may set him off, and recommend him to the Esteem of others, and makes it evident by his whole Conduct, that he is more intent upon their Good than his own Gain or Reputation: When he is a Practicer of rigid Virtue and genuine and undefiled Religion, without any Mixture of what is odd and fanciful, any thing

insinuating or ostentatious, or any thing singular or apt and intended to surprize. When a Man, I say, acts this sincere and simple Part, puts off all Disguise, and appears consistent with himself, and undesigning in his whole Conduct, he may possibly be one *deluded himself*, but cannot be a deliberate and *cunning Deceiver*.

SUCH a Part, it is plain, the Apostle acted in his Ministry among the *Thessalonians*. And therefore it is evident to us *at this Distance*, and must have been to them *at that Time*, that he believed he had a Commission from GOD to teach them *how they ought to walk and please him*: That when he pretended to *preach the Gospel of GOD to them*, this was not the Pretence of a wilful Cheat and Deceiver. He verily thought himself authorized of GOD, to teach them what he did; if he were himself deceived in this Sentiment, and imagined he was sent from GOD, when he had no such Mission. This Conceit in the general is possible, I confess. We have known some *in our Days*, who have deceived themselves, or suffered themselves to be imposed upon by the great Deceiver of Mankind, with a fond Imagination that they were the *Prophets of GOD* and *his Embassadors* to Men, and have heartily laboured, whilst they were under the Power of this Delusion, to deceive others. How then did it appear, how could it appear to the *Thessalonians*, that the Apostle was not thus under the Power of Delusion, and mistaken himself in a Matter of such Importance? To remove this Difficulty let it be observed.

II. *Secondly*, THAT, as to the Matter now under Consideration, *their own Reason might help them to judge whether what the Apostle taught*
was

SERM. X. *was by Revelation from GOD or no.* For the Matter before us is the Conduct of Life, the Method we must take to order our Conversation, if *we would walk and please GOD.* Now all the Rules delivered by the Apostle for this Purpose, besides such as respect *the Doctrine of a Mediator*, were none else, but the original Laws of Truth and Reason, evidently founded in the Nature of Things, and resulting from their mutual Relations. Look over the Particulars insisted upon, in any one of the Epistles of this Apostle, to the *Romans, Corinthians, Galatians*, and you will find he requires us to render *no Service* to GOD, he binds us to no Duty to *our Fellow-Creatures*, nor obliges us to act any Thing in the *Conduct of our selves*, but what is evidently founded in Nature and Reason, besides what has Dependence on the peculiar Doctrine above-mentioned, which is a Point of mere Revelation, and could not have been known by natural Light only. You have all particular Rules of this Kind, summed up by the Apostle, in these few Generals, which we are taught by the *Grace of GOD which hath appeared to us*, viz. *the denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and living soberly, righteously and godly in the World.* And are not these the plain Dictates of sober and unprejudic'd Reason? Is it not evidently fit and decent that Men should be sober and temperate in themselves, and have Appetites and Passions under the Restraint and Conduct of Reason? That they should be just to their Fellow Creatures, and readily yield them all their Rights, *natural, ci-*

vil and sacred? And that they should have the SERM. X. utmost Veneration for G O D their Maker, and carry it at all Times dutifully towards him, to whom they owe so much? Nay, would it not be a Behaviour manifestly unfit for them to do otherwise? A Conduct reproachful to their reasonable Nature?

B U T when it is farther considered, how much more fully and clearly, these Rules were laid down by the Apostles (who were in the general Men of low Rank and vulgar Education, *Paul* only having been *brought up at the Feet of Gamaliel*) than by the most celebrated and learned of all the *Heathen Philosophers*, it must give them Ground to conclude, that this Knowledge had been acquired by them in some uncommon Way, and not by *meer Force of Genius*, or the ordinary Light of Reason. And it was farther evident to them, that this Knowledge in Things moral and divine, which so far exceeded that of the wisest among themselves, was fit to have proceeded from the G O D of Wisdom, and must have been received from him by the Apostles, either *immediately*, or thro' some *other Hands*, in an uncommon and extraordinary Way. So far common Reason would have led them. The Thing hitherto carried its Evidence along with it. The Knowledge the Apostle had in these Matters, was what he could not have come at in the common Way of acquiring Knowledge; because by the natural Force of Reason, unassisted by Revelation, it was not to be acquired by the wisest and most inquisitive among Men; tho' all

SERM. X. the Duties required, were manifestly congruous to Reason, when once they were made known. And at the same Time it was every Way agreeable to the most natural and reasonable Notions Men have of the Deity, to suppose the Discovery was made by Him; seeing it was in Order to settle the Nature of true Religion, set up the pure Worship of the true God, establish his Authority over his Creatures, and teach them *how they must walk and please Him*.

AND as to the Duties that are founded on the Doctrine of a *Mediator*, this may farther be observed, and must have been obvious to them even upon a slight Reflection, that supposing the Doctrine true, the Duties enjoined are very proper and natural Deductions from it. The Doctrine it self is indeed a Matter of pure Revelation: Was not to be discovered by natural Light, because in a great Measure dependant upon mere Will and Pleasure. For it was wholly in God's own Breast, whether he would admit any Mediation for his offending Creatures; tho' when he had resolv'd in this Way to be reconciled to them, it might not be so entirely a Matter of arbitrary Determination, *whom he would constitute Mediator*, it being justly to be questioned, whether there were any other Person proper for this Undertaking, or equal to it, besides his *own Son*. But this Design having been fixed, and this Mediator constituted and commissioned, and his Will and Pleasure made known to us, the Duties of Religion demanded *upon this Foundation*, come recommended to us by the Reason of the Thing, and appear highly fit to have been required from us, and conformed to by us; and must have had the same Appearance to the *Thessalonians*, and other

other Converts from *Heathenism* in the primitive Times. The Scheme it self laid for our Salvation is worthy of the divine Wisdom, and the Duties required immediately result from it. If GOD the Son, be, by divine Appointment, *Mediator* between GOD and us, how fit is it that we should own him, and receive him, and trust him in *this Character*, if we would get any Advantage by his Mediation?

AND the Matter standing thus, the Apostle had this farther Evidence to offer, that he was no weak and deluded Man, that what he taught them carried Conviction in it. It appeared highly reasonable in it self, and every Way fit to proceed from GOD. The Rules of living laid down by him came recommended by their own Weight. He shewed them how they might *walk and please GOD*, and he could leave it to their own Conscience, and unprejudic'd Reason, whether he taught them any thing wild or fanciful, that savoured of Dotage and Delusion, or spoke any Thing to them but *the Words of Truth and Soberness*.

AND yet, since he taught these Things so much above the common Rate, so much more fully, and distinctly, and with so much stronger Conviction than the wisest *Philosophers*, and all the while professed to have come at this Knowledge and Skill, by immediate Revelation from GOD, this was a favourable Circumstance to procure Regard and Credit to his Pretensions. For he did not proudly boast of any natural Powers, exceeding the rest of Mankind, nor pretend to outdo the most famed among the Heathens for Reason and Learning, by the Force of a superior *Genius*, or extraordinary Appli-

SERM. X. Application to the Search of Truth, but humbly owned himself a Debtor to GOD for the superior Knowledge he had, and professed himself to be a Messenger from him, to communicate it to the World, and that at all Hazards as to himself.

It is therefore manifest, I think, that the evident Conformity, of what the Apostles taught upon this Subject, I mean the Conduct of Life, with the common Reason of Mankind, must have convinced all their Hearers and Disciples, that tho' they were plain and many of them illiterate Men, yet they were not weak and injudicious, nor wild and visionary. When therefore they pretended to divine Revelations, as their own Regard to what they taught made it evident that they believed themselves in their Pretensions, so what has been now insisted on, makes it highly probable, that they did not admit this Persuasion, but upon due Enquiry and full Conviction of the Truth. They appear by what they taught, to be Persons of great Understanding and sound Judgment, and therefore could not be carried, by the mere Heat of Imagination, into a Sentiment that they are inspired Men, intrusted with divine Revelations.

So far therefore, there seems to be good Reason to believe that the Apostles really taught *how to walk and please GOD*, by immediate Direction and Assistance from him. But to put the Matter out of Doubt, I observe,

III. *Thirdly, THAT they wrought Miracles in Confirmation of what they taught, and to vouch for the Truth of their Revelations.* And miraculous Operations are in holy Scripture called

called the Testimony of GOD, ⁹GOD also SERM. X.
bearing them Witness, with Signs and Wonders,
and divers Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost.
 And these were in the strictest Sense their Cre-
 dentials; the authentick Vouchers for their
 Mission from GOD and Inspiration by him. If
 they were not to be believ'd on their bare Word,
 yet for *their Work's Sake*. They gave evident
 Proofs, Proofs evident even to the Senses of
 Men, that they were indued with *Divine Pow-*
er, and by this they made out the Justice of
 their Pretensions to a *Divine Authority*.

AND such unusual Powers and mighty Ope-
 rations are the proper Vouchers in such a Case.
 Nor is it fit that any Pretences should be
 made to divine Inspiration, or indeed to *Infal-*
libility, without producing these Vouchers. For
 it is not reasonable to suppose, GOD should
 entrust any mortal Man, with the Revelation
 of a new Religion, or let him into the full
 Knowledge of his Will, about Matters of Du-
 ty and Salvation, to be communicated to others,
 and demand *their* Belief and direct *their* Con-
 duct, without furnishing him with some *extra-*
ordinary Powers, to support his *peculiar Cha-*
rafter, and procure him Credit among those to
 whom he is sent. They act but the Part of
 wise and cautious Men, who stand upon their
 Guard against Deceivers, and demand from such
 as pretend to so high an Office, what *they can*
do more than others, as a Proof that they are
 thus singularly favoured of GOD. For if they
 can do no more than others, why should they
 be thought to have a more honourable Charge,
 or be singled out to bear so high a Commission?

⁹ Heb. ii. 3.

SERM. X. But when it plainly appears, that their singular Pretences are supported by singular Powers, by *Operations extraordinary*, and uncommon, if not plainly divine, they challenge Regard and Credit, and produce such Vouchers as must establish their Authority among all, but such as are very sceptical and incredulous.

INDEED it is not yet agreed by the Writers on this Subject, what is the *proper Notion* of a *Miracle*. Some say it is such an Operation as manifestly exceeds all the *Power of Nature*, or in other Words, passeth all the Bounds of *created Power*. And some of our Saviour's Miracles seem to have been such. It doth not seem to lie within the Compass of created Power, to quicken a dead Carcass, and recall a departed Soul into Flesh, which yet our Saviour did, when he raised the Dead. But who can pretend to know the *utmost Bounds* of created Power? Or tell what wonderful Operations exceed the Power of Angels? It was certainly a miraculous Act in our LORD, to *still the Tempest*, when his Disciples thought themselves drowning. But who can assuredly know that such an Act as this is out of the Power of an Angel? And must it not destroy the Evidence of Miracles in a great Measure, to give such a Definition of a Miracle, as will leave room for perpetual Doubts, whether it be one that is wrought, or no? And yet this seems the necessary Consequence, if the forementioned be the proper Definition of a Miracle: If it be an Operation that exceeds all created Power, and must proceed only from what is divine. For till it be known how far created Power *can go*, and what Effects it can produce, we cannot upon this Supposition, know what a Miracle

racle is. And I doubt we have not sufficient SER. X.
Data to proceed upon, for settling these Powers. And if not, how can we know what Effect is properly miraculous? And whilst we are ignorant of this, what Evidence can we have of any Truth, whose Credit must be supported by such an Operation?

A MIRACLE indeed, must be an extraordinary Effect, and surpassing any Power with which we are acquainted. For otherwise how should it raise our Wonder? How can it give us any extraordinary Idea of the Person who produces it? But may it not be such an Operation, without being properly divine? May it not pass the Bounds of all Power, known to us, tho' it should not exceed the Bounds of all created Power, much of which must certainly be unknown to us?

YES certainly, may it be said, but, *would it not be the most convincing Argument in the World, of a divine Inspiration and Mission, to prove it by such Operations as must be the Effects of a divine, and could not proceed from any or all created Power?* I own it would, if we could certainly know what Operations are proper to GOD, and not to be performed by any Creature. But as long as we have no certain Way to come at this Knowledge, we must be content with as much Certainty in this Case as the Nature of Things will bear, and not destroy that Evidence which we may have from Miracles, by puzzling our selves with such a Notion of a Miracle, as will leave it uncertain, whether the Effect produced be miraculous or no.

THEY who pretend to come to us from GOD with an extraordinary Commission, should do somewhat exceeding the Bounds of all Pow-

SER. X.  er known to us. For without doing somewhat more than other Men can do, how should they raise our Wonder, or give us Conviction that they are extraordinary Persons? Which they should certainly be, who come to us in the Name of GOD, and demand our Belief of what they teach, and our Regard to what they require by *Virtue of a Commission* received from GOD. But it doth not appear necessary, that these extraordinary Operations should exceed all the Bounds of created Power, or that nothing should be allowed for a Miracle, but what doth so, because, upon this Supposition, we must very often, if not always, be at an Uncertainty, whether a Miracle be wrought or no.

BUT if a Miracle be only such an extraordinary Performance, may it be said, *an Angel may work a Miracle, and a wicked Angel therefore as well as a good one*, since for any thing we know, their natural Powers are equal. And may not these evil Spirits furnish some of their Vassals with such extraordinary Powers, and employ them to deceive Mankind? And may not the *Doctrines of Devils* pass this Way on the World for divine Revelations? Will these wicked Spirits make any Scruple, of calling their Delusions, by such an honourable Name? And if they can work Miracles, and empower their Agents to do so, to procure them Credit, must they not be received as *divine Revelations*, unless we had a certain Rule by which to distinguish Miracles wrought by *Messengers of Satan*, from those wrought by such as certainly come from GOD? And if there be no Way to distinguish one from the other, what Evidence can Miracles give to any Doctrine, or what Credit and Attestation to any Teacher?

CER-

CERTAIN it is, that miraculous Powers are *proper Credentials* for a divine Messenger, and give solid Attestation to his Pretences; else GOD had never born Witness by them, to the Apostolical Ministry and Mission. For the GOD of Wisdom can never employ *improper Means*, and such as are not fit for his Purpose, to attain *his Ends*. But how then shall we get over this Difficulty?

THE Way, I think, is plainly this; if it be more easy to distinguish *Doctrines of Devils* from *Divine Revelations*, than it is to know the utmost Compass of created Power, and what extraordinary Operations may proceed from such Power, and what must proceed from GOD, because it exceeds all created Power, then the Message they bring, and the Doctrines they teach, must be taken into Consideration, to make a right Judgment, whether a Miracle be wrought by a *Diabolical Power*, or by what is *Divine*. We have some good Rules of judging; whether a *Doctrine* be fit to be admitted for a *divine Revelation*, when we can have none by which to judge with any Certainty what Operation may be, and what cannot be *within a Creature's Power*.

SOME Doctrines are not capable of being proved by a Miracle. Such a Doctrine is that of *Transubstantiation*. For a Miracle is an extraordinary Operation evident to Sense. Somewhat we can hear, or see, or feel, and know, at the same Time, to be the Effect of some Power extraordinary, superior to our own, or any other with which we are acquainted. But Transubstantiation destroys all Evidence of Sense. And if what we see, and feel, and taste to be Bread, is not Bread, but the very Flesh and

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 Blood of a Man, what Assurance can we have, that any mighty Operation performed before our Eyes, is not all the while Illusion and a Cheat? *Meer Appearance and no Reality?* But if a Man will give Credit to his Senses, and believe such an Operation to have been performed, this very Belief destroys the *Doctrine*: he having as much reason to distrust his Senses in one Case as in the other, and to *doubt the Miracle*, as *believe the Doctrine of Transubstantiation* attested by it. And this, by the Way, is a demonstrative Proof, that Transubstantiation can be *no Doctrine of Christianity*. Every Branch of Christian Doctrine being capable of miraculous Attestation; for otherwise miraculous Powers had been in vain conferred on the first Ministers of it.

AND there are other Doctrines, which, if we should suppose Miracles wrought to support their Credit, must yet be disowned in Spite of the Miracles. Such, for Instance, were the Maxims of *Pagan Theology*, and the wild Notions entertain'd by the Heathens, concerning the Nature of their Gods, and the Worship to be rendered to them. We have a remarkable Caution upon this Head, to the Purpose I am speaking, in the Law of *Moses*, *† If there arise among you a Prophet, or a Dreamer of Dreams, and give thee a Sign or a Wonder, and the Sign and Wonder do come to pass, whereof he spake to thee, saying, Let us go and worship other Gods, which thou hast not known, and serve them; Thou shalt not hearken to the Words of that Prophet, or Dreamer of Dreams: For the LORD your*

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*† Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3.*

GOD

GOD proveth you. It was evident to this People, by the clear Light of Reason, that the GOD they served was the living and true GOD, and therefore these Pretenders to Divinity among the Pagans were false Gods. So that those Signs and Wonders which were given, to withdraw them from the Worship of *the true GOD*, could not be divine Attestations to the Doctrines taught, unless it could be supposed, that GOD would vouch for the Truth of what was, not only manifestly false, but *destructive* at the same Time, of all true Religion. And the same must be said of all Doctrines that appear to the *common Reason* of Mankind to be *utterly unfit* to proceed from GOD, or manifestly contradict any Truth of which we are certain by the Light of Nature. Should *Miracles* be wrought in Confirmation of such Doctrines, they could not be admitted as divine Attestations to them; for Truth can never contradict Truth, nor GOD confirm by extraordinary Operations what it is *manifestly unfit* for him to assert at all; or if it be in general fit to be asserted, is yet not proper to be spread and propagated *by him*, in such an *extraordinary Manner*. It were a Reproach upon GOD, to suppose he would empower Men to work Miracles for confirming Trifles, or Things which are hardly worth our knowing, or that have no Influence into our present virtuous Conduct, or our future Happiness.

It is possible indeed, that a Messenger should come from GOD upon a particular Errand, the Import of which is not altogether to be judged of by these Rules, and yet may deserve Credit, upon the Account of the miraculous Powers, by which Attestation is given to his Mission. *Moses* was certainly sent on such an Errand

SERM. X.

rand from GOD to *Pharaoh*. 'Thus saith the LORD GOD of Israel, let my People go. This was a Message that might possibly come from GOD, and might not. There was nothing implied in it inconsistent with any Perfections of the divine Nature. He might make *Israel* his favourite People, without doing any Thing unbecoming himself; and after they were taken into this dear Relation to himself, he had Authority to ask their Release from the *Egyptian King*. These were Truths that would admit of no Dispute or Doubt. But the Matter of Fact, that he had taken *Israel* into this close Relation, and that he did actually require their Liberty and Release from their present Bondage, was a Matter that would bear being questioned. *Moses* comes to *Pharaoh* in the Name of GOD, and asserts this Relation, and claims this Release. But before he would go on this Errand, he humbly asks of GOD the proper Credentials, both to the People of *Israel* and the *Egyptian King*. 'Behold they will not believe me, nor hearken to my Voice; for they will say, the LORD hath not appeared to thee. Upon which GOD gives him a Power to work Miracles. And he actually did "these Signs in the Sight of the People, to procure himself Credit to his Message, upon these Attestations. Tho' the Matter asserted, might have been true or false in it self, yet as long as it did not appear utterly unworthy of GOD, it was to be believed when it was confirmed by the Testimony of Miracles. I say, since it did not appear utterly unworthy of GOD.



FOR a Difference is to be made here, between SERM. X. what is *not fit* for GOD to do, and what is *utterly unfit*. We are not so proper Judges of what is *not becoming* as we are of what is altogether *unbecoming* GOD. Some Things are manifestly unfit to be taught, required or done by GOD, because repugnant to the Perfections of his Nature. But many Things may appear to his own infinite Understanding fit for him to do, or teach, or enjoin, which may not seem so proper to us, because we cannot see so far as he. *Moses's Errand to Pharaoh* therefore being not utterly unfit to be a Message from GOD, he should have been receiv'd, as a *Divine Messenger*, when he produced miraculous Powers to vouch for his Authority, and give Testimony to his Commission. And thus far all Revelations that pretend to be divine, are also to be credited, if they are not *utterly unworthy of GOD*, and are confirmed by miraculous Powers.

FOR tho' we have no certain Rule, by which to know what Signs and Wonders are performed by a Power properly divine, and exceeding the Bounds of all created Power, yet may it easily and certainly be known, that no created Being can act, but with the Cognizance and under the Control of GOD. And it is hardly consistent with the Goodness of his Nature, to let his Creatures be imposed upon, by the Argument and Evidence of Miracles, in a Matter, where their Assent is to be founded only upon this Evidence. And this is always the Case where what is delivered in his Name, cannot be known *not to come* from GOD; for that it is unfit to proceed from him: nor yet *to come* from him, till the working a Miracle gives the  
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SER. X.

 Conviction. But should he permit any of his Creatures to work Miracles in such Cases, Men would be either frequently deceived by *pretended divine* Revelations, or utterly confounded how to distinguish them from what are *real*; since every Thing confirmed by a Miracle, must be believed to come from G O D, unless it be utterly unfit to have him for its Author. And should he permit any of his Creatures, without Control, to work Miracles, to vouch for any Thing which they may be willing should pass upon the World for Divine Revelations, Men must be frequently led into Mistakes in so important a Matter, and believe that to be from G O D, which may have quite another Original.

So that should any Men pretend to divine Revelations without Authority from G O D, and perform Wonders and work Miracles, in Confirmation of these Pretences, and yet offer nothing all the while to the World under this Notion, that is *utterly unfit* to come from G O D, we have all the Reason in the World to believe that they would be controlled in these Pretensions, and that by Persons of superior Powers, if no other Way would lay open *the Cheat*, and prevent the *Delusion of Mankind*. And should any arise, that would oppose such as were truly commissioned of G O D to make known his Will, and empower'd by him to work Miracles for Proof of their Commission, and by miraculous Operations also contradict these divine Messengers, it is reasonable to believe, that these Opposers would be controlled and confuted, by the manifest Superiority of the others Power. This was plainly the Matter of Fact in *Moses's* Case. The *Egyptian* Sorcerers for some Time opposed him in his Pretensions, and

and <sup>SER. X.</sup> *resisted the Truth*, or denied that he had a Commission from G O D for what he did, and would have made this out by *counter-Miracles*. But they were controlled after two or three successful Attempts. The Power they had was limited by a superior Power, and they were constrained to acknowledge that the Power of *Moses* exceeded theirs: *⁊ This is the Finger of G O D*. And in all like Instances, it is reasonable to suppose, that such as withstand those, who are intrusted with divine Revelations, would be controlled and convicted.

THE Sum of what I have said upon this Head, is this; That if any pretend by miraculous Power to confirm Doctrines contradictory to any Truth of which we may be certain from *natural Light*, or that are *utterly unfit* to come from G O D, because repugnant to the Perfections of his Nature, we must reject them, *notwithstanding* the Attestation given them by Miracles. But where the Doctrines taught, or the Rules of Life delivered by any who pretend to a Commission from God, are congruous to all our natural and just Notions of G O D, (whether we had them first from the mere Light of Nature, or by supernatural Revelation) there a Miracle has Place, and is a proper Attestation to the Truth of such Pretences, and the Authority of the Persons who make them. Nay in every Case where the Mind must otherwise be held in Suspence, and can't come to any Determination concerning the Matter of the Revelation, whether it be from G O D or no, but can only pronounce concerning it, that *it may*, or *may not*, then the working Miracles that are open, and

⁊ 2 Tim. iii. 8.

⁊ Exod. viii. 19.



*The Obligation of Christians to walk*

SERM. X. plain, without Fraud or Disguise, and without Opposition or Control from *others*, (or if any Opposition should be made) the continuing to work Miracles to the *Confusion* and *Silence of Opposers*, is a proper Attestation to the Truth of what is asserted, and should guide and determine our Assent.

AND if in such a Revelation, the main Body of which appears fit to be from G O D, there should be *some Doctrines* delivered, which yet we cannot comprehend, this will not weaken the Proof of it by Miracles. For it is no Way unworthy of G O D, to suppose he should make some Things the Subject of his Revelations, which yet our limited and very narrow Minds cannot grasp. So that if *such Doctrines* are delivered and Miracles wrought to confirm their Truth and Divine Original, especially if these are open, numerous, continued for a long Tract of Time, useful and important in themselves, and altogether uncontrolled, they are to be esteemed as divine Attestations to *their Truth*, and the *Doctrines themselves* are to be received as *coming from G O D*.

NOW the Revelations made of G O D's Mind and Will by the Apostles, were certainly such as would allow of this *Attestation by Miracles*. The main Body of them was agreeable to Reason, worthy of G O D, and suitable to the Perfections of his Nature. And if some Doctrines delivered in these Revelations, are too sublime to be comprehended by us, yet they also are capable, as I have said, of this divine Attestation: And the whole Body, and all the Parts of this Revelation having been confirmed by miraculous Operations, must for that Reason be divine. And this Evidence will be strong  
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and glaring when we consider, how *many* and *great* Miracles the Apostles wrought, how *open* and *manifest* they were, how *useful* to Men, how *free* and *uncontrolled*, and to how many Persons, and for how long a Time, the same Powers were communicated by them. SERM. X.

THE *Theſſalonians* therefore having been Eye and Ear-Witneſſes to many ſuch Operations *themſelves*, and having certain Teſtimonies from all adjacent Cities and Regions, that they were common in all Places where the Apoſtles miniſtred, and being convinced from the natural Evidence of Things, that thoſe Rules of Life, of which the Apoſtle ſpeaks in my Text, were ſo far from being unworthy of GOD, that they were every Way fit to proceed from him, muſt have been obliged, and indeed in a Manner conſtrained, to admit theſe Miracles as Atteſtations from GOD to the *Apoſtolical Commiſſion*. And hereupon muſt have been convinced that they were delivered by divine Authority, and were to be regarded as Laws of the ſupreme Ruler, and not [barely Counſels or Advices of wiſe and good Men.

NAY let me add, that theſe Rules of Life being ſo manifeſtly fit to come from GOD, muſt go a great Way in recommending thoſe Doctrines for divine, on which many of them were founded, or were taught together with them. It being very reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that thoſe who laid down ſuch Rules of Life, as far exceeded what were ever known to the *greateſt Philoſophers* among the *Heathens*, or taught by them, and who copied theſe admirable Rules into their own Lives, muſt have come by their Doctrines in the very ſame Way in which they came at theſe Rules, *viz.* by a divine Revelation.

SER. X. on. And when both were confirmed by many plain uncontested and undeniable Miracles, the Matter must be out of Doubt. They who were not to be convinced by this Evidence, must have been prejudic'd or stupid, and out of the Reach of all rational Conviction.

AND thus you see how the *Theſſalonians* might have had proper Evidence that they *ought to walk as they had received Instruction* from the Apostle and his Assistants, *and please GOD*. For these Men pretended a divine Commission for what they taught, they lived up to those Rules which they gave out to others in the Name of GOD, and therefore believed themselves in these Pretensions. They could appeal to the *unbiass'd Reason*, even of their Auditors, whether these Rules were not worthy to have GOD for their Author; and they did moreover by many and great and uncontrolled Evidences of extraordinary Power, make it appear that they had a Warrant from Heaven for what they did, and were indeed the Ministers and Messengers of GOD.

BEFORE I proceed to the next general Head, another Enquiry here naturally offers, *viz. How, in this Age of the World, Christians may be brought under Obligations of this Kind, by the ordinary Ministry of the Word?*

THE Reason of this Enquiry is plain. *Ordinary Ministers* should not presume to talk with the Air and Authority of Apostles. They come not with new Revelations in their Mouths, nor with infallible Interpretations of the old; nor with any Power to impose new Duties and Rules of Life. Should they make these Pretensions, it were but just to demand their Vouchers; that is, the *very same Evidence* the Apostles gave of  
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of their divine Authority and Mission. For SER. X. such Pretensions fall very little short of Apostolical Power, and should therefore be supported with like Evidence.

BUT all they can honestly and justly pretend to, is to explain that Body of Revelations, which, by extraordinary Ministers, has been already delivered to the Churches: To press the Duties there enjoined on the Consciences of Men: To keep these Revelations incorrupt as they have received them, and transmit them pure to succeeding Generations. Nor can they claim *greater Regard* to what they deliver in the Name of GOD from his Word, than what *honest and diligent Men*, with all the proper *Helps* of Study and Learning, the *common Influences* of the Spirit of Truth and Grace, and with *Authority* from GOD to give themselves up to *such a Work*, may justly challenge.

THE Enquiry now before us therefore amounts to this, *How far are Christians laid under Obligations by their supreme Ruler, to walk according to the Directions given in the ordinary Ministry of the Word, and may in so doing hope to please GOD?*

AND here it is plain, that they can be under no Obligations of this Kind at all, but upon Supposition of a Revelation made by others of the Mind and Will of GOD. For ordinary Ministers do not pretend to any *immediate Message* from Heaven, but only to teach Christians out of a standing Revelation. Such a Revelation is allowed by all who bear this Name, to be contained in the Writings of the Old and New Testaments. And all this being admitted, it is easy to see, how far every Man *must be under Obligation* to walk according to  
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SER. X. the Directions given in the ordinary Ministry of the Word.

THIS Revelation is translated into our own Language. We can't say indeed, that this is so perfectly done, as that the Sense of the Original should never be mistaken. *Distance* of Time from the first writing, *Ignorance* of the *Customs* and *Usages* of Nations so remote, and of the *particular Circumstances* on which several Parts were written, will render some such Mistakes unavoidable. But as far as the Sense of the *Original* is truly given in the *Translation* (and this in the general, and in the most important Passages may be depended on) we have the Revelation in our own Hands, may look into it with our own Eyes, and enter into its Meaning with our own Understandings. And with this we are to compare, and by this and by our common Light and Reason (which must be presupposed to all Revelation) are we to judge of *all the Doctrines* and *Rules of Life*, which we receive from the ordinary Ministers of the Word. They cannot pretend truly to teach us the Will of GOD, without first fetching it hence. And we our selves are to consult the Holy Scriptures in the best Manner we can, to know whether what they teach us is agreeable to them or no. So that all that is necessary to our knowing when we are under Obligations to walk as they direct us, is to know when, what they teach us is the Will of GOD, certainly founded in Reason, or delivered to us in his Revelations.

AND the Way to know the latter is plain and easy. For when the Rules they give for our Conduct, are expressly contained in Scripture, or are manifestly consonant to what are there contained, or are obvious Consequences from those

those Rules, so that by admitting the one, *we must* allow the other, we are as much under Obligation to regard and comply with them, as if, by an audible Voice from Heaven, GOD was pleased to declare his Will to us. What wants indeed of this clear and cogent Evidence, must be admitted more slowly, and with greater Diffidence, but we are to pay Regard to it, as far as it appears to us, to be the Mind of GOD made known in his Word: Nay, as far as it might appear thus to us, were it not for our own criminal Neglect. For whatever they teach, is to be brought to *this Touchstone*, and tried by it, and either received or rejected, as it appears to agree with it, or differ from it.

AND should the ordinary Ministers of the Word, challenge Belief upon their own Authority without pretending to Infallibility, or pretend to be infallible without working Miracles to support these Pretensions, they arrogate such Powers as GOD never gave them, and *lord it over his Heritage*, and are to be protested against as Usurpers over the Church and the Consciences of Men. So that you now plainly see, how far Christians who own the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, for a complete Body of divine Revelations, are under Obligations to pursue the Directions of ordinary and fallible Ministers, *viz.* as far certainly as it is manifest *to their own Consciences*, that the Rules they give, are according to the Mind of Christ, nay as far as Evidence is offered of this, apt in its own Nature to convince, and that actually would convince, were it not for their sinful Negligence or Prejudices.

BUT where *we Ministers* have to do with any, who *doubt or dispute against* the divine Authority




 thority of the sacred Writings, it is necessary to establish this Truth before we can make it evident to them, that they are under Obligation to follow the Directions given them from these Writings. And whether they are *wanton Infidels*, or *sober Doubters*, it is very fit, and many Times necessary, we should use our Endeavours to clear up this Point. Many a sincere Christian who has *the Witness in himself*, may yet in an Hour of Temptation, have Doubts of this kind sit very close and heavy on his Mind. These are not always to be thrown off as a Temptation, but must sometimes be opposed with rational and convincing Evidence. And in every such a Case the Minister of the Word should produce the Proofs, by which the divine Authority of the Scriptures is to be maintained and evinced. For till the Mind is satisfied on this Head, all the Talk about Duty and Obligation, except it be with Respect to those Duties which are plain Branches of the Law of Reason and Nature, would be to no Purpose.

It would take up more Time than is consistent with my present Design, to lay these Proofs before you. I shall only say, that we have as much Evidence as the Nature of the Thing will allow, the greatest moral Certainty in the World, that the Apostles of Christ committed those Revelations to *Writing*, which they confirmed by *Miracle*: That every Writing of this kind which is *necessary*, hath been convey'd down to us, and that *incorrupt* in all *Matters of Importance*: That those of the New Testament are such Writings, by which those of the Old Testament are acknowledged divine, and their Authority therefore confirmed.

There

There are moreover many plain Signatures of SERM. X.  
a Divine Hand on the Books themselves, and <sup>2</sup> all  
who have received their sanctifying Impressions  
have a farther Argument to justify their Belief,  
<sup>1</sup> *He who believeth on the Son of GOD, hath  
the Witness in himself.* These Hints must suf-  
fice here.

I have now done with the *first Branch* of my  
Design, the *Introduction* to the Apostolical Ad-  
vice in my Text, and am next to proceed to  
the *Advice it self*, which will be the Subject of  
my next Discourse.

*Consider what you have heard, and the LORD  
give you Understanding in all Things.*

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<sup>2</sup> See Sermon. i. p. 20, 21.

<sup>1</sup> 1 John v. 10.





*Abounding more and more in what  
will please GOD.*

## S E R M O N III.

On I THESSAL. IV. I.

*Furthermore, Brethren, we beseech and exhort you by our LORD Jesus Christ, that as ye have received of us, how ye ought to walk and please GOD, so ye would abound therein more and more.*

SERM. XI.



HAVING considered under three Heads, what is introductory to the Advice given in the Text, in the two former Discourses, I now proceed,

II. Secondly, To consider the *Advice it self*. *Abound therein more and more*, viz. in walking so as to please GOD. And the Import of this Advice will be given under the two following Heads.

I. I T



I. IT certainly implies, *proceeding and persevering in this Course.*

II. *Secondly, GROWTH and Increase in it.* These *Theſſalonians* had been directed by the Apostle, to the *right Way* in which to please GOD; they had, by the Blessing of GOD on his Ministry, been brought into this Way (for he chiefly directs this Advice, to such as were *real Converts*) and now he presses them vehemently to keep on in it, and quicken their Pace.

I shall consider each of these distinctly. And,

I. *First, WHEN* the Apostle charges these Christians, to *abound more and more* in walking and pleasing GOD, he certainly requires them to keep on in this Way. Not to turn back again, nor turn out of the Road. Indeed, this is not the direct Meaning of the Word *abound*, but it is plainly implied in it, as the lesser in the greater. They could not abound in this Work, if they did not proceed in it; or not make Improvement in true Religion if they did not continue to be truly religious. As they had *received how to walk and please GOD*, the Apostle here charges them to pursue the Directions he had given, and proceed in the Way into which they were entred. And that,

I. *First, WITH Stedfastness.* In Opposition to Wavering and Instability, to desultory and uneven Walking in our Christian Course. We must set out in the Christian Life with a fixed Purpose of proceeding, and must be confirmed daily in this Purpose. We must not take it up at first with Reserve or Hesitation, as if we doubted whether there were just Reason for it. This were to set out with a *double Mind*,

SERM. XI: *a* Mind not determinate in its Elections, or not fixed in its Resolves. Of one thus minded the Apostle justly observes, that he is *a unstable in all his Ways*. Ever uncertain and various. Sometimes carried with strong Inclinations one Way, and e're long carried back again perhaps with greater Violence. Sometimes all Fervency and Zeal in religious Performances, and by and by as cold and indifferent, without any Feeling of religious Principles, or any Regard to the Rules and Precepts of Christianity. Such *Uncertainty* and *Unevenness* can never be the Result of a settled Principle of Spiritual Life, nor well consist with it. And yet under the Influence of such a Principle must the real Christian live.

THERE is nothing therefore more preſt upon Christians than this Stedfastness in the New Testament. They are to be *b rooted and established in the Faith*. Their Hearts are to be *c established in Holiness*. They must *d hold fast the Profession of their Faith without wavering*. They must be *e stedfast and immovable*, and this must be laid as the Foundation, and dispose them always to *abound in the Work of the LORD*. They must *f cleave to the LORD, with full Purpose of Heart*. They must set out in this *holy Work*, with such Purpose, and must keep to it, and not suffer it in any wise to slacken or abate. They must live and act under the constant Influence of it, and make it appear by their whole Conduct, that they have made their Choice upon due Deliberation and full Convic-

*a* James i. 8.

*b* Col. ii. 7.

*c* 1 Thes. iii. 13.

*d* Heb. x. 23.

*e* 1 Cor. xv. 58.

*f* Acts xi. 23.

tion, and see no Reason to retract it. They SERM. XI. are engaged in the most noble Design in the World, to please their Maker, recommend themselves to his Love, and be happy for ever in his Favour and Enjoyment; and the farther they proceed in Pursuit of this Design, the more should they be fixed in it, and resolv'd to drive it on, and bring it to an Issue.

NOR must they be made remiss by any Temptations, or shaken and discouraged by Difficulties in the Way. They must break thro' all Obstacles, and get over all Difficulties, and charge thro' all Dangers, and search out and shun to their utmost all Snares, and neglect and despise all Allurements, that in any Measure would weaken their Purposes, or seduce them from their Fidelity to GOD. And this is to be the Work of every Day. Under the Influence of such a Resolution, their Behaviour must be even and consistent with it self, and their Life and Actions in general are to be of a Piece. Hereby they should make it appear that their Religion is built on a sure Foundation, that it is not a Structure tottering in it self, nor easy to be shaken or demolished by Storms, tho' they pour upon it with all their Fury.

IN short, the Business of a Christian is to be entred upon with peremptory Resolution; with Purpose irrevocable, and this Purpose must be stedfastly pursued. And the farther we proceed in our Christian Course, the more stable and fixed must this Purpose be. But,

II. *Secondly*, WE should proceed in this Course with *Life* and *Vigor*. We are to engage in the Design with our whole Heart. All the Powers of our Minds are to be devoted to the Work. We are to labour in it with all our



SERM. XI.

*Might.* The Business of Religion is not to be esteemed a *meer Amusement*, nor an *inferior Concern* which we need not mind with any Intention of Thought, nor prosecute with Diligence. It is our great Concern. It is in a Sense our only Business. The very End for which we were made, was to honour and please God. To this Business we are therefore to apply all the Vigor and Attention of our Spirits. And great Care is taken in many plain Expressions to this Purpose, in the holy Scriptures, and by many Allusions, to let us know that this is not Work to be done by a listless, lazy or indolent Mind. There we are told we must <sup>s</sup> *take Heaven by Violence*: That we must <sup>h</sup> *wrestle with Principalities and Powers*: That we must run like <sup>i</sup> *Racers*: That we must <sup>k</sup> *endure Hardships*, and <sup>l</sup> *keep Watch* like *Soldiers*. We must <sup>m</sup> *fight the good Fight* till we conquer and obtain the Crown. <sup>n</sup> We must *give all Diligence to add Faith to Virtue, and Knowledge to Faith, and Temperance to Knowledge, and Patience to Temperance, and Godliness to Patience, and brotherly Kindness and Charity to Godliness, and that these may be in us and abound.* Must <sup>o</sup> *give all Diligence to make our Calling and Election sure.* And <sup>p</sup> *to be found of him without Spot and blameless.*

FROM all these Passages it is evident, that we must proceed, in our Christian Walk and Work with Vigor. That we must neither saunter, nor loiter, nor grow weary and give

<sup>s</sup> Mat. xi. 12.<sup>h</sup> Eph. vi. 12.<sup>i</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 2.<sup>k</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 3.<sup>l</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 13.<sup>m</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.<sup>n</sup> 2 Pet. i. 5—9.<sup>o</sup> Ver. 10.<sup>p</sup> Chap. iii. 14.

out in our Race. We must on the contrary exert our selves to the uttermost. Must <sup>¶</sup> *run as to obtain*, and *strive so as to get the Mastery*. And it is richly worth our while. For we strive for an *incorruptible Crown*, for <sup>†</sup> *a Crown of eternal Glory*. When so important and glorious a Prize is in View, can a Man allow himself to be cold and heartless, or lazy and languid in his Endeavours to obtain it?

SHALL the *Worldling* be all Life and Flame in pursuing Trifles, in his Endeavours to enrich himself with transitory Treasures, which the <sup>†</sup> *Moth and Rust* may eat out, and *Thieves may break thorough and take away*, and the Christian be all the while stiff and frozen in Pursuit of immense Possessions? Treasures that will never waste of themselves, nor be destroyed by any Accident; will never be lost *by him*, nor taken away *from him*, either by Fraud or Violence.

SHALL the Man who would *climb to Dignity*, Honour or Power, be all Zeal and Fire, stirring and unwearied in prosecuting his Design? Shall he be restless in his Mind, close and constant in his Applications, travelling by Day, and waking by Night, ever *active*, never *idle*, till he has reached his End, and shines out with a short and delusive Blaze of Glory here below? And shall the Christian be drowsy and slothful, indolent and unactive, when an <sup>†</sup> *eternal Weight of Glory is in View*? when he is encouraged to Diligence, by the sure Prospect of the highest Honour and Advancement? of be-

¶ 1 Cor. ix. 25, 26.

† 1 Pet. v. 4, 10.

† Mat. vi. 19, 20.

¶ 2 Cor. xi. 17.

SERM. XI. ing made " *a King and a Priest unto GOD for ever?* Shall uncertain Hopes of fading and trivial Honours, inspire the ambitious with so warm a Zeal, and keep it still glowing, and shall not the *sure Hopes* of Glories infinitely more lasting and important, keep the Christian's Zeal alive, or animate him to the close Pursuit?

SHALL the *Sensual Sot*, who has thrown off the Man, and gives himself up to the blind Conduct of brutal Inclinations, hunt with unwearied Diligence, after his mean and paltry, his vile and sordid Satisfactions, and neglect his Business, his Fame, his Health, lose his Sleep and keep his Thoughts on a continual Stretch to pursue his Pleasures? And shall the Christian all the while be listless and lazy in Pursuit of the manly and rational, the divine and relishing Pleasures of the heavenly State? How much \* *wiser in their Generation are the Children of this World, than the Children of Light?*

BUT shall Christians be under this Reproach, when they are animated to Diligence and Industry by so much nobler Views? When they act under the quickening Influences of the Spirit of Life and Purity? And when a gracious GOD has taken so much Care, to have them frequently excited, by the Ministry of the Word, to act with more becoming Fervency, in the Matters of their Salvation? Should not these Considerations shame us out of all Indifference? Are not Heaven and eternal Glory worth our utmost Pains? Or can we be too much in earnest, about the Things of GOD and our

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\* 1 Pet. ii. 9. Rev. i. 5      \* Luke xvi. 8.



everlasting Interests? What will the observing SERM. XI. World think of us? What can we think of our selves, when we profess to *have laid up our Treasure in Heaven*, and yet shew no more Concern to possess these Treasures, but seem to make it more our Business to secure for our selves and our Posterity, a large Portion of the Things below?

LET us rouse our selves, and act with all the Vigor we have in this great Work, and push thro' all the Difficulties in our Way. The Prize contended for is Heaven and eternal Happiness. The Trial will be quickly over, and when we are come to the Possession of the Crown, we shall regret (if heavenly People can be touched with any Regret at all) that we have dreamed away so much of Life, and been so heavy and heartless in all our Motions towards eternal Rest. But,

III. *Thirdly*, We should proceed in this Course with *Chearfulness and Delight*. And this is indeed a proper Mean to render us diligent and active in our Work. If we can but love our Business, and find Pleasure in it, it will be no hard Matter to persuade our selves to be lively at it. Love is the noblest Spring and Principle of Action. The Mind warmed with this Passion, can despise Difficulties, can face Dangers, can scorn Ease and little Advantages, can rouse and fix the Thoughts, and indeed exert its *utmost Force*, and that with Pleasure and Delight. Let this Affection once possess the Soul, tho' it should settle on the *most vulgar*, nay the most vile and despicable Object, it will waken all the

SERM. XI. Flame of the Mind, and rouse all the Man,  
 and make him act even beyond himself.

LET common Experience be here consulted. If a Man has set his Heart on any Object, and becomes devoted to it, is not this the common Case? Be it Wealth, or Power, or Fame, or Honour, or Learning, or sensual Delight, he can take Pains, and be unwearied in his Pursuit, because he feels a Pleasure in it. Business, that would otherwise be burthensome, grows light and easy when a Man's Heart is in it, whatever be the Charm that draws it thither. Let the Pains which many take at their Diversions be a Proof of this. With how much more Toil and Fatigue are these pursued, than that very Business on which all the Comforts of Life, and the Subsistence of themselves and Families depend? And yet the Notion of Diversion, and the Delight they have therein, takes off the Sense of Weariness and Pain. They strain every Sinew, put forth their utmost Strength, and yet are easy all the while.

AND would not this be the Case too, if Men could find their principal Pleasure and Satisfaction in a Course of Religion? If our Hearts were in our Work, <sup>2</sup> *we might run and not be weary, and walk and not be faint.* Are holy Spirits in Heaven tired with perpetual Activity and Diligence, tho' their Employment is all Extacy and Rapture, and their Minds are ever stretched to *the utmost*? And whence is it that they are so unwearied in their Services, but because their Work is their Delight? It is so congenious to their Temper, and so relishing to their

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<sup>2</sup> Isa. xi. 31.

Taste, as to be their Rest and Happiness. And is not theirs the happy State at which we aim? And should we not, whilst we are here on Earth, get as much Meetness for it as we can, and grow as like those amiable Beings? This is surely very much our Interest, when our Work will hereby be made so much the easier, our Diligence so much the greater, and this Increase of our Diligence will work for us *a more exceeding Weight of Glory.*

BUT it is our *Duty* too as well as Interest. It is bound upon us by the strongest Ties. GOD not only <sup>a</sup> *loves a chearful Giver*, but requires also a chearful Service. And that in all the Parts and Branches of Religion. It was our LORD'S <sup>b</sup> *Meat to do his Father's Will.* He took as much Pleasure in it as in his necessary Food. And herein he is a Pattern to us. <sup>c</sup> *The same Mind should be in us, as was in him*, if we would approve our selves to be his genuine Disciples. We should be animated with a like Zeal for GOD, and Love to our Duty. And if we love our Duty like our LORD, we shall have Pleasure, the highest Satisfaction, in performing it. And if we feel such Pleasure in doing our Duty, we shall certainly set about it, and proceed in it, with the utmost Chearfulness. In such a Frame of Mind none of GOD'S <sup>d</sup> *Commandments will be grievous to us.* Our Saviour's <sup>e</sup> *Yoke will be easy, and his Burden light.* We shall <sup>f</sup> *rejoice in the Way of his Testimonies more than in all Riches.* We shall find his

<sup>a</sup> 2 Cor. xv. 7.

<sup>b</sup> John iv. 34.

<sup>c</sup> Phil. ii. 5.

<sup>d</sup> 1 John v. 3.

<sup>e</sup> Mat. xi. 28.

<sup>f</sup> Psal. cxix. 14.



*Words & sweet to our Taste, yea sweeter than Honey to our Mouths.* And when by these Means our <sup>h</sup> Hearts are enlarged, we shall find our selves ready to run the *Way of his Commandments.* And it is certainly our Duty to do thus, if it be our Duty to love GOD. For true Love to GOD must consider him as Governor of the World. And how can we honestly profess such Love to him, if we are not easy and pleased under his Government? Or how can we pretend to be pleasant under his Government, if we are not chearful in our Submission and Obedience?

LET us keep on therefore in our Christian Walk with Chearfulness. Let none of our Duties grow tiresome or grievous to us. Let us by all Means keep alive a Flame of devout Love to GOD in our Hearts, and feel the Virtue and Influence of it in the Fervency of our Devotions, and the Cheerfulness of all our Services. That our Hearts may be in our Work, and we may *be satisfied as with Marrow and Fatness,* when we are waiting upon GOD, or endeavouring to approve our selves to him in a Course of strict Obedience to his Will.

IV. *Lastly,* We must proceed in our Christian Walk *with Constancy,* and *persevere to the End.* This is not the Work of a Day, or Year, or any certain Portion of our Time, it is the Business of Life. It is what our Minds should in a Sense be always intent upon: Work we should always have in Hand. It is what we should pursue with full Purpose, and never wholly intermit or give over.

I do not mean (nor can any of you take me in such a Sense) that we must fill up all our Time

with Acts of Devotion, or religious Duties in SERM. XI. the strictest Sense. The Laws enacted by our Redeemer, suppose us to have a Concern with our Fellow-Creatures, as well as with our Maker, and undertake to regulate the Conduct of civil and domestick Life, as well as the Matters of divine Worship publick or private. We have Bodies as well as Spirits, to be concerned for: And tho' these are by much the viler and less valuable Part, yet much of our Time, nay ordinarily the most of our Time, will be taken up about their Concerns. But when we endeavour to regulate our Conduct in the Concerns of this bodily Life, and those we have with our Fellow-Creatures, according to the Laws of GOD, we are carrying on the general Design, and *walking so as to please him*. And whilst this is our constant Pursuit, the Advice I am giving under this Head, is complied with. And this Design must run thro' Life, nor must we ever give over the Prosecution of it.

NAY this general Design must stretch beyond the utmost Line of this mortal Life. We must make it our Endeavour *to walk and please GOD*, whilst we live with a View and Expectation of *doing it better* after Death, when our Souls shall be receiv'd into Paradise, and lodged in *Abraham's Bosom*. There happy Spirits will be consummated in all Respects, in Purity and Felicity; will be perfectly holy that they may be perfectly and perpetually happy. They will be exalted to the utmost Vigor of which they are capable, and will have the noblest Work and Service, for the perpetual Exercise, and Employment of this Spiritual Activity. They will be warmed throughout with the most devout Love to their GOD and Redeemer, and  
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SERM. XI. the most devout and disinterested Affection to all their Fellow-Citizens in the *new Jerusalem*. And can such a potent Flame be smothered; and never break out into Acts of Duty and Devotion to GOD, or Expressions of Tenderness and Good-will to the dear Fraternity into which they are admitted?

No. The Life of Heaven will indeed be a Life of Rest, of perfect Rest, but such Rest as is well consistent with the utmost Activity. It is the Rest of Souls possess'd of their chief Good, but very busy, perpetually busy in the Enjoyment of it. They are at Rest, because they are ever swallowed up, by the most suitable and relishing Satisfaction. And can a Soul be in such a State as this, and all the while asleep, without Exercise or Motion? This is the *Rest of a Body* indeed, but the Rest of a Mind, a perfected and glorified Mind, is quite another Thing. For where this Rest of the Mind is full and absolute, it supposes the Perfection of its Life, and this can never be, where its Power is not put forth in the strongest Acts and Exercises, such as engage the whole Soul, and make it exert its utmost Strength. And it is downright Contradiction and Inconsistency, to suppose the Soul possessed of GOD, and perfected in Love to him, and yet at the same Time, rendering him no Homage, or Service, nor using any Endeavours to obtain his Approbation, and some dear Pledge of his Love to it.

THE Heavenly State is therefore fitly spoken of in holy Scripture as a State of Rest. <sup>i</sup> *They*

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<sup>i</sup> Rev. xiv. 13.



*shall rest from their Labours.* The Pain and Difficulty of Duty will be here at an End, but the Bonds of Duty will be about us still: And our perpetual Happiness will spring from the perpetual Ease and Pleasure, with which our Duties will be then performed. All counter Inclinations, all external Impediments, all Solicitations to Neglect or Omission, will be ever removed. The *Love of GOD* will be perfected in the Mind, the *Authority of GOD* over the Man will be fully established, and from the double Influence of the highest Affection and most unlimited Submission, Obedience will freely flow with *constant Facility*, and the *highest Satisfaction* for ever. The Mind will feel its self blest, in its vigorous Attempts to please GOD by doing his Will, and its lively Sense and Evidence of his Acceptance and Approbation. This is the happy State to which we are taught, by our holy Religion, to aspire, and which we are encouraged to expect, even <sup>k</sup> *to see the Face of GOD in Righteousness, and be satisfied for ever with his Likeness.*

FOR such a State we are in this Life to be prepared and fitted. This is the great Business we have to do here. We must be made <sup>l</sup> *meet for Heaven*, by growing well disposed for the Work of Heaven. And this is a Business important enough to demand our whole Strength and Time. And after a Man hath in a long Life of close *walking with GOD*, made the utmost Advances he can in Religion, and an Heavenly Temper, how wide a Step must he take at once, from his present Attainments, to

<sup>k</sup> Psal. xvii. 14

<sup>l</sup> Col. i. 12.

SERM. XI.

the Perfection of the better World? Can any therefore have a rational and well grounded Hope of the heavenly Glory and Happiness, who doth not keep close to the Pursuit, and persevere in it to the End? Who only begins the Christian Race, but gives out and proceeds not in it. Or who at some Seasons may be zealous in the Things of GOD and Salvation, in all outward Appearance, and in his own Opinion, but makes not this the Business of his Life; is not religious at all Times, and whatever Difficulties may attend, or Storms may threaten his Christian Profession or Practice? *It is he only <sup>m</sup> who holdeth out to the End, that shall be saved. He who <sup>n</sup> finishes his Course, and the Fight of Faith, that is likely to obtain the Crown of Righteousness. He who is <sup>o</sup> faithful to the Death, that shall have a Crown of Life.* We must not grow weary of our LORD's Service, *in due Time we shall reap if we faint not.* But if we should faint and give out, thro' the Weight of our Work, the Length of the Journey, the Difficulties of the Road, or the Opposition we meet with in the Way, we shall miss our Reward, and the Harvest we might otherwise gather. *¶ If we draw back, it will be to Perdition.* Instead of pleasing GOD, he would *have no Pleasure* in us. He would indeed abhor us; more being meant a great deal, than the Words, at first Appearance, seem to carry in them.

So that we must keep on in the narrow Road that leads to Life, till we have obtained Posses-

<sup>m</sup> Mat. x. 22.<sup>n</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.<sup>o</sup> Rev. ii. 10.<sup>p</sup> Gal. vi. 9.<sup>q</sup> Heb. x. 39.<sup>r</sup> Ve. 38.

fion of it. If we leave the Road or faint in SER. XI. it, we shall certainly miss the *Recompence of the Reward*. Difficulties may attend, Storms may rise and blow furiously upon us, violent Opposition may be made to our Design, by the great Enemy of our Souls and his Agents. But tho' these Things will discourage, they should not divert us from the steady Prosecution of our Purpose. We must go on resisting our Enemies, breaking thro' Obstacles, surmounting Difficulties, and hold out in our Warfare to the End, if we would be lawfully crowned, and obtain the *Recompence* in that Way, in which only it will be adjudged to us by the supreme Ruler. It is as much our Duty to keep on in this Way as to enter into it. And not only our Duty, but a *necessary Mean* (both in Nature, and by divine Appointment) to our obtaining *the End of our Faith and Holiness, even the Salvation of our Souls*. As we are to keep this End in our Eye to direct our Course, so we are to be constant in our Pursuit, and persevere to the End.

THE Design of the *Evangelical* Constitution and all the merciful Concessions and rich Promises of it, is to assert and establish the Authority of G O D, and recover Mankind and bring them back to their Duty and Allegiance to their supreme Ruler; and prevail with them to own this Authority, and that not as a *temporary Claim*, but a perpetual and eternal one. To own it for a Time only, and then revolt from G O D again, and withdraw from his Command, nay tho' it should be with a Purpose of return-



SERM. XI. *ing again to our Duty at a more convenient Season,* is not to fall in with his Purpose, but to act in flat Contradiction to it. And if this may be reconciled with any fair Hope in his Promises, we shall make the Gospel defeat its own Ends, and the Grace of GOD, so gloriously there display'd, overturn his Government, and license Disobedience to his Commands, and Contempt of his Authority. Or in other Words, encourage <sup>1</sup> *Sin, because Grace hath abounded.* A Suggestion which the Apostle disclaims, with the utmost Detestation.

It is our *Interest* therefore as well as *Duty*, to be constant in our Endeavours to please GOD and persevere in our Christian Walk to the End of Life. So necessary is it to set out with full Purpose of Heart, that we may persist and never give over our Work till we yield up our last Breath. We must die with *the Weapons of our Warfare*, (if I may allude to that of the Apostle) in our Hands, and *hold fast* <sup>2</sup> *the Beginning of our Confidence to the End.* In a Word, we must <sup>3</sup> *die in the Faith* of Christians as well as <sup>4</sup> *live by it*, and continue to live by it as long as <sup>5</sup> *we live in the Flesh*, if we would with any Hope and Confidence, <sup>6</sup> *commend our departing Spirits* into the Hands of our blessed Redeemer.

AND thus have I gone through the Advice of my Text in the first Sense, I told you, it might bear, and shew you what is implied in our continuing *to walk, so as to please GOD.* We must pursue this Purpose with *Stedfastness*,

<sup>1</sup> Rom. vi. 1.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. x. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. x<sup>i</sup>. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. x. 38.

<sup>5</sup> Gal. ii. 20.

<sup>6</sup> Psalm xxxi. 5.

and not be *uncertain* and *various* in our own Minds, nor *uneven* in our Walk. We must proceed with *Life* and *Vigor*, and not be *lazy* and *Leiterers*. We must be *cheerful* at our Work, and find a Pleasure in it: Not *drudge on* against Inclination, and perform Duty as a grievous Task, but as a Business we love. And we must be *constant* and *persevering*, that whatever Obstacles are in the Way we may break through them, and continue at our Work till our great LORD and Master discharges us by Death, and removes us to the World of eternal Recompence. I proceed now,

II. *Secondly*, To observe that the Apostle's Advice implies, that we should not only proceed in this Course of Life, and continue to walk and please GOD, but endeavour to *grow* and *improve* in *such a Way of living*. The Apostle presses the *Corinthians*, not only to be steadfast and immoveable, but <sup>b</sup> *always abounding in the Work of the LORD*. Not only to abound at some Seasons, but always. Christians should not stint themselves to *any Measure of Stature* in Christ, till they have reached the full Measure, and are grown up to Perfection. As long as we stay out of Heaven, there will be Room still to go forward. We may make large Advances beyond our present Attainments, and after the utmost Progress we can make in Religion in this Life, find our selves much short of the Perfection of Heaven. But though Perfection be not attainable in this Life, we should always endeavour to advance forward towards it. The Apostle's Advice in my Text,

SER. XI.

being to the same Purpose with that he gives elsewhere, that we should *c* *walk worthy of the LORD unto all Pleasing, being faithful in every good Work, and increasing in the Knowledge of GOD*, i. e. such Knowledge of him as is affecting and practical. Which in other Words is to make Improvement in all the Parts and Branches of true and sound Religion, and therefore in all those Particulars in which we must *walk and please GOD*.

So that this Advice implies, that we should endeavour to improve, in all the Particulars insisted on in the preceding Discourse. That we should for Instance

*GROW in Faith*, as that Grace has Respect to the Mediator. It is only in and through Him, that a sinful Creature can be brought into a State pleasing to *GOD*, and be in a Capacity to do any Thing he will accept. For he will not, because he cannot with due Concern for his own Honour, accept any Duties or Services from apostate and imperfect Creatures, but what come recommended to him by the Intercession and Merits of Christ. And our Redeemer will recommend no Services to his Father's Acceptance, till himself be owned and accepted *as Mediator* by a cordial Act of Faith. This Faith must be laid as the Foundation of all our *acceptable Service*. From him we must derive, by the Operation of his holy Spirit, those vital Influences, and that Principle of devout Love and holy Reverence, from whence all Obedience, properly Christian, must spring. And by his Intercession, must all this Duty and



Obedience be recommended to the Father, for SERM. XI. his gracious Acceptance.

NOR is *Faith* necessary, only, to our first Entrance upon a State pleasing to GOD: It is equally needful to our Continuance in it. This Grace is so important in it self, and of such Use and Efficacy towards the Christian Life, that the Apostle tells us of himself, the <sup>d</sup> *Life I now live in the Flesh, is by the Faith of the Son of GOD.* The very same Influence from Christ, which is necessary at first, to convey spiritual Life to the Mind, is necessary to maintain this Principle; the very *same Mediation* which is necessary, to recommend the first hearty Tender of our Repentance and Duty to GOD, is necessary afterward to recommend our defective and faulty Services. And it is as plain, that the Increase of our Faith, is the only Way, in which we are capable of growing more and more *pleasing and acceptable* to GOD: Because hereby we are likely to derive greater Measures of spiritual Life from Christ, and to be more powerfully recommended by Him, to his Father's Acceptance and Favour.

WOULD we therefore *abound more and more* in what is pleasing to GOD, we must take Care to cultivate this Principle; and grow in Faith that we may grow in Grace. We should be more deeply sensible of our *Need of Christ*, and of his Power and Readiness to help and recommend us, and grow into more *close Dependance* upon him, and into more firm and *cheerful Confidence* in him daily, and that both for <sup>e</sup> *Righteousness and Strength*, for Pardon of our Sins

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<sup>d</sup> Gal. ii. 20.

<sup>e</sup> Esai. xlv. 24.

SERM. XI. and defective Duties, and for Power against our sinful Inclinations, and all Temptations to Evil. We should more constantly and stedfastly <sup>f</sup> *look to him*, and lean upon Him: More and more value our selves on having such an Advocate, and <sup>g</sup> *glory in Him*, and with thankful Wonder own our Debt and Obligations to Him: And upon all proper Occasions endeavour to have more ready Recourse to Him, and that with improving Pleasure and Satisfaction.

II. Secondly, We should also grow, or *make Increase* in our *Repentance for Sin*. As this is necessary at first, to our passing from a State of Enmity to God, into a State of Friendship with Him; so is it equally necessary *to our Continuance* therein. It will be of constant Use, because of many sinful Infirmities, and too often necessary on account of willful Sins. And by our improving Penitence, we shall grow more meet for divine Friendship and Converse.

I do not, by this, understand a more *passionate Grief* or Shame for Sin. These may be greatest upon the Sinners first Awakenings and Convictions, when all *the<sup>h</sup> Iniquities of his Life compass him about, and the Pains of Hell take hold of him*. These are not the *chief Ingredients* of evangelical Repentance. There may be many Tears shed for Sin, and many passionate Lamentations over it, where yet there is no hearty Abhorrence of it. The dolorous Wailings and Outcries, when we trace them to their true Source, proceed only from a Love to Sin, mingled with a Dread of Punishment.

<sup>f</sup> Heb. xii. 2.

<sup>g</sup> Gal. vi. 14.

<sup>h</sup> Psalm xlix. 5. Psalm cxvi. 3.

The beloved Sin can't be retained, and divine Vengeance avoided; nor the Man spare his Lust, and be saved himself. *Hinc ille Lachrymae.* This is the proper Source of his Fears, and the true Original of his Grief and Lamentations. But true Repentance is quite another Thing. It may begin indeed in a Dread of divine Displeasure, and a <sup>i</sup> *fearful looking for of fiery Indignation*, but it always implies in it a Conviction of the <sup>k</sup> *exceeding Sinfulness of Sin*, Displeasure at it, and a fixed Abhorrence of it, and Enmity against it.

AND, in these Respects, evangelical Repentance is certainly capable of Increase. We may become more *sensible* of the heinous Evil of Sin; we may have *greater Abhorrence* of it, and a more confirmed Enmity against it. We may be more careful to avoid it, more watchful against all Temptations to it from without, and all remaining Inclinations to it within: In a Word, more solicitous to <sup>l</sup> *cleanse our selves from all fleshly and spiritual Filthiness*, than at our first setting out in the Christian Race. Our Sorrows for Sin may then *be more quick*, and our Lamentations over it *more dolorous* than afterward: But the Essence of Repentance doth not lie in the Plenty of our Tears, and the Loudness of *our Cries*, but in the Detestation of *our Crimes*; and the real and unfeigned Aver-sion of our Hearts from them, and Enmity to them. And the more we keep our selves from the Commission of Sin, and the more cautiously we avoid all Temptations to it, the more we manifest our fixed Enmity and Aver-

<sup>l</sup> Heb. x. 27.    <sup>k</sup> Rom. vii. 13.    <sup>l</sup> 2 Cor. vii. 1.



SER. XI. *W*ion. Let it be our Concern and Endeavour in this Method, to make evident the *Growth of our Repentance.*

III. *Thirdly*, WE should also grow into a deeper Sense of the *divine Omnipresence*, and into *closer Intimacies with G O D*. Our former Enmity to G O D is indeed renounced, upon our first Repentance *from dead Works*, and Conversion to G O D, and a League of mutual Amity is concluded. But the Friendship cannot be compleated upon the first Reconciliation. After great Progress made in the Christian Life, and after the Friendship has been long carried on, and on our part in the general faithfully maintained, there will be great Room left for Improvement. For how much short doth our utmost Acquaintance with G O D in this Life, come of the Intimacies of the heavenly State? Of the immediate Vision, perfect Resemblance, and satisfying and perpetual Fruition of G O D in Glory? <sup>m</sup> *It doth not yet appear what we shall be.* This is a State so far from being attainable in the present Life, that it is not fully to be discerned and known. After the most intimate Conversation with G O D and Enjoyment of him, to which we can be admitted in this World, we can only give a dark Guess at the greater Pleasures, and more glorious Friendship of a future Life. Then we are to <sup>n</sup> *see Face to Face, to know as we are known*; and I may add also, that, in our Measure and Degree, we are to *love as we are beloved*, to love properly, <sup>o</sup> *with all our Soul, and Mind, and Might*, after our Capacities have been stretched, and our Powers

<sup>m</sup> 1 John iii. 2.

1 Cor. xiii. 12.

Mat. xxii. 37.

exalted

exalted to the uttermost ; so that there will be SER. XL much Room for Increase and Improvement as long as we live. 

WE may certainly know GOD better than we now do, more clearly and more practically. We may be more deeply impressed with his Perfections, formed more fully into a Resemblance of those which are *imitable*, and struck with a more becoming Veneration of those which are above our Imitation, and of what infinitely transcends our Thought in all. We may yet more fervently and devoutly love him. Who of us can say he loves GOD in any Proportion to what he deserves? It were Arrogance, nay blasphemous Arrogance in the flaming *Seraphim*, to pretend to such a Passion. But who of us can say he loves him to the utmost of his Power, as much as it is possible for *him* to love? And yet every Degree of Affection short of this, is criminal, according to the *Rigor of Justice*; what it would become him rather to refuse and disdain than accept, if he were not now on a *Mercy-Seat*.

WE may yet grow into firmer Confidence in Him, may have more frequent Conversation with Him, and whilst this is carrying on, may be more close, lively and serious in our Correspondence. We may do more than we have done to please GOD, and be more solicitous and concerned than we have been to do this, and avoid the contrary: And in Order to this, may bear about on our Minds a more constant and affecting Sense of the divine Presence, to be a *Restraint from Evil*, and *Incentive to Good*. In all these Respects, we may live more *with GOD*, than we have done. None of us can stand forth and say, I have herein fully done  
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SERM. XI. *my Duty, and failed in nothing. If we know our selves, and will deal faithfully, the very best of us must charge many Failings and Defects upon our selves, in all these Instances. Here, therefore, is room for Growth. Let us look to it, that we make <sup>p</sup> Increase with all the Increases of G O D.*

IV. *Fourthly, W E must also grow into a more full and constant Dependance on G O D. Must every Day endeavour after a more deep and humbling Sense of our own Insufficiency, Indigence and Emptiness, and a more lively Sense of the Sufficiency and Power of G O D, and our Need of him, and that on all Accounts bodily and spiritual, for Time and for Eternity. The Creature is by Nature a dependent Being. And it is the indispensable Duty of a reasonable Creature to make free and voluntary Acknowledgment of this, and to carry it in all Instances as becomes such a Being: To expect and ask all Supplies from G O D, and ascribe all Possessions and Enjoyments to his unmerited Beneficence. But such is the Pravity of our Nature since the Fall, that every Man is assuming, proud and self-sufficient: Very apt to live of himself, and cast off Dependance on G O D.*

Now in the first Humiliations of the Soul for Sin, and its Conversion from it, this assuming Temper is in a great Degree mortified; but it is not rooted up. It receives its Death's Wound, but is not utterly extinct. Much remains to be done, for the perfect Cure of this unnatural Pride, and to bring the Mind to that humble, expecting, suppliant and grateful Temper,



as becomes one in absolute Dependance upon GOD. A deeper Sense of this Dependance may be wrought on the Mind, more free and explicit Acknowledgments may be made of it: Expectations from GOD may be more constant, for such Things as we are bid to ask, and more modest where we only have his Permission: Prayers may be more frequent and fervent, and sure we may live in a much more constant and lively Sense of the unmerited Benefactions of our GOD, both to our Bodies and Souls, and pay a larger Tribute of Praise and Thanksgiving.

Who of us makes that thankful Acknowledgment of divine Favours, as he ought? Or stirs himself up by the Sense of his manifold Obligations to that chearful Frame of Mind, and that lively Service and Obedience to the blessed GOD, which should be the natural Effect of his Favours, of the Abundance of those good Things he scatters among us with so liberal an Hand? *Who of us* hath so humble a Sense of his Distance from GOD, of his Poverty and Emptiness, and his absolute Dependance upon GOD as he ought? *Who of us* hath that entire Deference for his unerring Wisdom and his Sovereign Pleasure, as to sit down fully contented with the Portion he assigns us, if it be not suitable to our own Sentiments and Expectations? *Who* so earnestly as he ought, looks up to GOD, and solicits for Spiritual Blessings, or who so modestly expects and asks temporal ones? But as to living upon GOD himself as our Soul's Portion and Rest, the Spring and Fund of their Felicity, how exceeding deficient are the best of us? And should it not be our Concern, to make greater Advances, in this Branch of the Christian Life? But

V. Fifthly,

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V. *Fifthly*, WE must also grow into more *entire and chearful Subjection to the Authority of GOD, and his commanding Will*. We must endeavour to have deeper Convictions of his Sovereign Rights, and to make more free and ready Acknowledgment of them, by yielding our selves up more fully to his Command, by making more diligent Enquiry into his Mind, and being more exactly conformable to his known Will in Heart and Life, in all our Thoughts, Words and Actions. For how can GOD be honoured and pleased without the Acknowledgment of his Authority, and that in its utmost Extent? Or how can this be sincerely acknowledged, without ready and free Submission to it? And can there be *sincere Submissions* made to this Authority, where there are no Endeavours to know and do what GOD requires, and that in all Instances? The divine Authority is as much to be acknowledged in every particular Command of his, as in any one of those Particulars; and where it is not submitted to *without Reserve*, it is not heartily owned or submitted to *at all*. For he who is a wilful Transgressor *in one Point*, as the <sup>1</sup> Apostle argues, *is guilty of all*. For he who said, *do not commit Adultery*, said also *do not kill*. So that if a Man *do not commit Adultery*, yet if he be guilty of Murther, he certainly violates *the Law*, and injures and insults *the Lawgiver*, by trampling on his Authority.

IT is an unlimited Obedience which is due to GOD. In yielding such Obedience, in the fullest Sense, the Perfection of the reasonable

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<sup>1</sup> James ii. 10, 11.

Creature consists. And every Man who hath the Hopes of a Christian, expects to grow up to such Perfection in Heaven. Now all Hope implies Desire, and that vehement in Proportion to the Strength of Expectation. And all sincere Desire puts the Man upon endeavouring, with all his Might, to obtain what he, above all Things, wishes for. Whoever therefore wishes for the Perfection of Heaven, should use his utmost Endeavours to acquire it, and will certainly endeavour it in Sincerity. The Perfection of Heaven therefore consisting in the Perfection of Duty and Obedience to G O D, he who aims at it, and aspires after it, will be daily endeavouring to *cleanse himself from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, and to perfect Holiness in the Fear of G O D.* And tho' such Perfection is not to be attained in this Life, yet will he *be pressing on towards it.* He will every Day endeavour more fully to know his Sovereign's Will, and more exactly to do it. He will watch his *Thoughts, and Words, and Actions,* that he may do nothing displeasing to G O D, and sincerely endeavour to have all his Laws written fairly on his Heart, and thence transcribed into his Life. He who is *at all* concerned to please G O D, by doing what he has required, will also be concerned to please him *fully.*

AND is there not room for us all in this Respect to grow and improve? Alas! how defective are our best Performances? How much is the Course of our Duty interrupted? In how *many Things do we all offend?* How often do we disregard divine Authority? How frequent-

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. vii. 1.

<sup>1</sup> Phil. ii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Jam. 2.



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ly omit the Duties required, and more frequently perform them in a careless, dull and formal Manner? And how often do we wilfully transgress divine Commands? How negligent are our Enquiries, how dry and unpleasing our Researches into our Maker's Will? And how remiss are we in our Endeavours to do, what yet we know he hath required?

AND shall we allow our selves in so sluggish, in so stupid a Frame indeed? Is this a Temper consistent with our Obligations, our Profession, or our Christian Hopes? Is it either *dutiful* or *decent*? And if it be not, shall we not rouse our selves, and stir up all our drowzy Powers, and exert our selves for GOD, and with more Pleasure and Delight, and therefore with greater Diligence, search out what is his acceptable Will, and with Care and Exactness conform our selves to it? Shall we not make it our sincere and constant Endeavour, to be more entirely and unreservedly at his Command? Surely, thus it becomes us *to walk and please GOD, and abound in it more and more.* But,

VI. *Lastly, WE must also grow into a greater Concern for the Glory of GOD, and a more direct Regard to it in all we do.* This, as I have shewn in the first Discourse from this Text, is to be preferred by us to all worldly Interests and Considerations, and, as much as possible, is to be made *the direct and ultimate*, tho' many times not the *immediate* Intention of whatever is done by us; and this not merely out of Obedience to a particular Command, but as the Evidence of our sound Religion: At least this must be our highest End, if we would approve our selves real Christians, and in a State *pleasing to GOD.* We must have greater Regard to the Honour  
of

of GOD, than to our own *Ease, Safety or worldly Advantages* of any kind. Rather than deliberately do *any one* Thing that we know will dishonour GOD, we should renounce every Thing dear to us, or valued by us in the World. And nothing can contribute so much towards such a Disposition of Spirit, as to aim at the Glory of GOD in all we do, or to act in all Instances, so as to please him.

It is also necessary to our keeping up such a Disposition of Mind, and cherishing it, that we become mortified to earthly Interests and Enjoyments. Whilst these are inordinately lov'd by us, we shall certainly struggle hard to hold them; tho' they stand in Competition with the Honour and Interests of GOD. " *Love not the World, saith the Apostle, nor Things of the World; if any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him.* And very often are we called upon in the holy Scriptures, to become dead to worldly Objects, even to such a Degree, *as not to look at them, but keep our Eyes fixed on Things invisible and eternal.* Nay, so as to use and enjoy them as if we were *not possessed of them*, and so to resign and part with them, *as if their Loss did not affect us.*

BUT how much room have the best of us for Growth and Improvement here? May we not become much more dead to the World, and more fully devoted to GOD? May we not *abate much* of our Fondness for bodily Fruitions and earthly Comforts, and our Regard to our own Pleasure, Ease and Conveniency; that our Regard to the Honour and Interest of GOD

SERM. XI. may rise? Do we keep his Glory so constantly in our Eye, and so directly aim at it in all we do, as we might and ought? Alas! we all <sup>2</sup> *come short*, vastly short in this Respect, of *the Glory of GOD*. And yet if it be necessary, would we *walk so as to please GOD*, that we should endeavour to honour him in our whole Conduct, it is necessary that we should *abound herein more and more*, if we would *fully please him*. And every one who is truly solicitous to please GOD, will be concerned to do it to the uttermost. It is his Sin and Reproach to fall short of it; and for this Reason must be his Grievance and Burthen. And it cannot consist with this, for him to use no Endeavours to carry on his Regard to the divine Glory to the Height. No Man can be easy under a Load, and use no Endeavours to have it removed.

As therefore there is Room for our Growth and Improvement under this Head, it becomes us to exert our selves with greater Fidelity, Zeal and Diligence, that in every Thing we do, it may be evident to *our selves*, and *all* who look into our Conduct, that we are indeed devoted to the Interests of GOD, and prefer his Glory to all Interests of our own, and at least make it our sincere Endeavour, *whatever we do, to do all to the Glory of GOD*.

AND thus have I shewn you what is implied in abounding more and more in what will please GOD. An Enquiry will naturally arise hereupon, *viz. What is to be done by us, that we may thus abound more and more?* To which I shall answer in two or three Particulars, and



close this Discourse, reserving the Improvement of all I have said from the Text, to another Occasion. Now that we may thus abound, it is needful

I. *First*, THAT we exercise our selves much herein. It is the same Apostle's Advice to his beloved *Timothy*, that he would <sup>b</sup> *exercise himself unto Godliness*. Nor was this Advice given him merely as a Minister, but as a Christian. And the Original is much more emphatical than our Translation. It is an <sup>c</sup> *athletick* Term, borrowed from those Exercises that were customary among the *Grecians*, in which those concerned stript themselves, that they might exert their Manhood to the uttermost. Tho' it came by Degrees to stand for their performing their Exercises in their Schools: And thence has been very fitly transferred into the Christian Church, to signify those Exercises of Vertue and Piety, in which all the Members of this Church are to be trained up. Now the Direction I here give is the very Advice of the Apostle. Would you *abound more and more* in what will please GOD, accustom your selves to the Practice of what, I have shewn you, will please Him.

HABITS of serious Religion are this Way to be confirmed, however they are at first acquired. And after our Hearts are fixed for GOD, we must be much in the Practice of our Duty, if we would be apt and ready for any religious Performances. This Way Duty will grow natural and easy to us, and we apt and inclined to perform it. As any Man is more ready at that

: 1 Tim. iv, 7.

<sup>d</sup> γυμνασις from γυμνός nudus.

SERM. XI. Science or Labour to which he is much used, than that to which he is in a great Measure a Stranger. Disuse renders him unready, tho' once he was much versed in it. And the same will hold good in this Case. It is Use and Exercise that render a Man ready in all Business, in that of a Christian as well as in any other.

WOULD you therefore abound more and more in what is pleasing to GOD? First, know well what must be done by you for this End, and then abound in such Exercises. Live much *in the Exercise* of Faith in Christ, of Repentance for Sin, of Love to GOD and holy Friendship and Intimacy with him, of awful Regard to his Omnipresence, of Dependence upon him, and Trust in Him, of Subjection to his Authority, and Obedience to his Command, in the Preference of his Honour and Interests to all worldly Considerations, or in other Words, of Mortification to *this World*, and believing Regard to *a better*. Would you improve in these Instances of Religion, you must be much in exercising your selves to them. You must *always abound in this Work of the LORD*. And not only be frequent at these Exercises, but exert your selves in them, and endeavour to put forth your utmost Strength. Act always as those who are much in earnest. *Whatever your Hands find to do, do it with all your Might.* Rouse all the Powers of your Mind, and endeavour to keep them awake at these Exercises.

IF you are frequent at them, if you are lively and vigorous in them, you are likely to im-

prove in what is *pleasing to GOD*, and *abound* therein *more and more*. The Employment will grow familiar, easy, pleasant, habitual, and by this Means natural too. You will then follow the strongest Bent of Inclination in these Exercises, and be advancing forward to the Perfection of the heavenly State, in which they will be the very Health and Rest and Happiness of the Mind. Improvement in the Spiritual Life, Strength and Vigor in all the Faculties of the New Man, Delight in the Work, and strong Inclinations to it, will immediately result from frequent and lively Exercises of this Sort: They are the genuine and certain Effects of such a Cause. So that if you would *abound more and more* in what will please GOD, be frequent in these Exercises, and, when you are engaged, be *very much in earnest*. But,

II. *Secondly*, We must also be much *in Prayer to GOD*, for the needful Help and Influences of his holy Spirit. Our Dependence on GOD is absolute. Without him we can neither exist nor act. But we are even more dependent upon him as to *our spiritual* than in *our common* Concerns, as we have by Sin rendred our selves more indigent and helpless. We can't begin to live to GOD without the quickening Influence of his good Spirit, and without his continued Influences this Life cannot be maintained, nor on particular Occasions drawn out into vigorous Exercise.

Now Prayer is nothing else but the Voice of Dependence: The Call of a weak and indigent Being for Help and Supplies. And it is a natural Instrument of deriving common Supplies from GOD. Thus must we fetch in our



SERM. XI.<sup>f</sup> *daily Bread.* And it is, by divine Appointment, an Instrument of deriving from him our spiritual Supplies. We must *ask his holy Spirit*, if we would obtain it; and ask with a Frequency suitable to our continual Need, and with a Fervency proportioned to our great Need, of his Help and Grace. I have been shewing you in what Instances we must *walk so* as to please G O D, and to know how much this depends upon the Spirit's Influence, you may observe that the whole Course of a Christian's Life is called <sup>b</sup> *walking in the Spirit, walking after the Spirit, being led by the Spirit.* It is through *the Spirit we must mortify the Deeds of the Body, and mind the Things of the Spirit.* In a Word, it is by his Agency and Influence, we are first to be formed to an heavenly and spiritual Temper, and by the same Operation and Influence it must be maintained, improved, and carried on to Perfection.

AND the Case standing thus, it is fit, we should be frequent and importunate, in our Requests to G O D, that we may live under the lively and constant Influences of his holy Spirit. We should pray earnestly, that by him we may be prompted to such religious Exercises, may be assisted in them, and find Life and Power breathed by him into our Souls in the Performance of our Duty, and that we are <sup>i</sup> *strengthened with Might in the inner Man*, and enabled thereby <sup>k</sup> *to walk worthy of the L O R D unto*

<sup>i</sup> Mat vi. 11.

<sup>g</sup> Mat. vi. 7, 8. comp.  
Luke xi. 13.

<sup>h</sup> Rom. viii. 1, 4, 5, 13.

14.

<sup>i</sup> Col. i. 11.

<sup>k</sup> Ver. 10.

*all Pleasing, being fruitful and abundant in every good Work.* If we would have our Souls prosper, it must be under his gracious Influences. And it is fit we should beg earnestly, if we would procure them. Be much therefore in Prayer to GOD, for the Assistances of his blessed Spirit, if you would *abound more and more in what* is pleasing to Him. Again,

III. Finally, *WE* must diligently *attend on the Means of Grace*, in order to our *abounding more and more in what will please GOD.* And by the *Means of Grace*, I here intend, all the evangelical Institutions. By the Blessing of GOD on those Means, we may hope to make great Improvement in the spiritual Life. And their very Institution warrants our Hopes of such a Blessing. They are also fitted in their own Nature for the Exercise of our Graces, and by such Exercise to improve them. And are properly termed *Means of Grace*, not only as they are very gracious Appointments of GOD, but are the Channels for conveying the Influences of his Spirit, and Instruments for our making Improvement in all *gracious*, or heavenly and divine *Habits and Dispositions.*

It is true, Prayer, of which I have been speaking under the foregoing Head, is one of *these Means*, and one of the principal among them, and what must accompany the Use of all the others, and give Vigor and Efficacy to them: For all the Duties of Religion are best performed, that is, with most Acceptance and Success, when they are done, in Dependence on the gracious Aids of the holy Spirit; for which Reason I have spoken of Prayer under a distinct Head.

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*W* THE other Means are, Reading the Word of GOD by our selves, attending on the publick Preaching of it; solemn and set Meditation on what it offers to our serious Consideration, and celebrating the Sacraments of our holy Religion, especially attending at the LORD's Table with Diligence and Constancy; that being an Ordinance of frequent Use and Obligation, tho' *Baptism* is only once to be administred, and needs no Repetition.

Now we must be faithful and diligent *in using these Means*, if we would *abound more and more*, in walking so as to please GOD. We must diligently read the Word of GOD, not neglecting any Helps he is pleas'd to give us, for the better understanding of his Mind and Will, by good Commentators or Expositors, if we can procure them. We must diligently attend on the publick Preaching of the Word, in which it is to be opened and applied to the Conscience, with all the Advantage that can be given, by the *warm Address* of a lively and serious Speaker. And whatever GOD is pleased in either Way to discover of his Mind and Will, must be made the Matter of our frequent, serious and delightful Meditation. *David* gives this Character of a truly pious Person, that his <sup>1</sup> *Delight is in the Law of the LORD, and he meditates therein Day and Night.* And he himself acted up to this Character: <sup>m</sup> *O how love I thy Law, it is my Meditation all the Day.* And when the Gospel-Revelation has so many Advantages above the *Jewish*, and presents us with so many much more elevating Subjects, for af-

<sup>1</sup> 1 Psal. i. 2.<sup>m</sup> Psal. cxix. 67.



fecting and delightful Meditation, shall we allow our selves in a Temper of Mind, *less spiritual or elevated* than his? Is this suitable to our Privileges, or consistent with our Duty?

NOR should we omit Attendance at the *Lord's Table*, or keep our selves from coming under the Engagements of that Solemnity. It is indeed to be lamented when any rush on that Service without due Thought and Preparation. But it is as much to be admired and lamented too, that *any serious Christian*, should live in the long and customary Neglect of such plain and important Duty. You know how frequently you have been called upon in the Course of my Ministry, to the Performance of this Duty; and I now solemnly warn you at parting, that you, who indeed fear GOD, neglect it no more. Would you please GOD, and abound therein, *more and more* (every one who is a Christian, a real Christian, would do so) you must be diligent in the Use of *all Means*, and this among the rest.

AND thus have I gone thro' the *Advice* of the Apostle in my Text, and shew'd what it implies. It remains that the *Manner* wherein this Advice is urged, be also considered, and the whole applied to our present Purpose; which will be the Business of the next and *last Discourse* from this Text.

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*Apostolical Entreaties and Exhortations.*

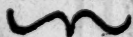
**S E R M O N IV.**



**I T H E S S A L. IV. I.**

*Furthermore, Brethren, we beseech and exhort you by our LORD Jesus Christ, that, as ye have received of us, how ye ought to walk and please GOD, so ye would abound therein more and more.*

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Am now to consider according to the Method at first proposed.

II. Secondly, **T H E Manner** wherein this Apostolical Advice is here urged. And this is contained in the first Clause of the Verse. *Furthermore Brethren, we beseech and exhort you, by our LORD Jesus Christ. There is not a waste*

waste Word in the whole Sentence, not a Word SERM. XI. but has weighty Sense in it, and enforces the Advice with a very strong and pertinent Argument. All may be laid before you under these *three Heads.*

I. *First.* THE Dependence of this Advice on what went before, Furthermore we beseech you.

II. *Secondly,* THE very dear and tender Appellation given to those, to whom he directs his Advice. Brethren, we beseech, &c.

III. *Thirdly,* THE Form of addressing them, which naturally also subdivides it self into three Branches, (1. *First,*) We beseech you. (2. *Secondly,*) We exhort you. (3. *Thirdly,*) We beseech and exhort you, by our LORD Jesus Christ. When I have considered the Force of each, and what Influence it should have on all, to whom the Advice was given, (which was certainly to Us now as well as the *Thessalonians* heretofore,) I shall endeavour to apply all; that, through GOD's Blessing, I may leave every Heart duly imprest with this important Charge.

I. *First.* THE Dependence of this Advice, on what went before, carries in it an Argument for complying with it. And this leads us back to the preceding Chapter: At the *fifth* Verse of which, the Apostle tells them, he was greatly concerned, in his Absence from them, to know their true State and Condition, being fearful, lest, through the Violence of Temptation, he might have laboured amongst them in vain. And in this distressing Concern for them, he had sent *Timothy* to get true Information of their



SER. XII. their State, who brought him such an encouraging Report of their Faith and Charity, as not only gave Ease to his Mind; but yielded Matter of much Comfort and Joy, such as he could never be enough thankful to GOD for. After which he closes that Chapter with warm Prayers for them, that what was lacking in their Faith might be perfected, that *they might increase in Love to one another, and to all Men, and that their Hearts might be established, unblameable in Holiness before GOD, at the coming of Christ with all his Saints.* Immediately after which he subjoins the Text, *Furthermore Brethren we beseech, &c.* The Original is τὸ λαίπρον, which is sometimes rendered *finally*. And I conceive the Sense and Force of his Reasoning would lie plain if we should translate, *What remains therefore, Brethren, but to beseech and exhort you, &c.* As if he had said,

“THE good Report I have concerning you,  
 “has dissipated all my Fears for you, and given  
 “me inexpressible Joy on your Account. I  
 “left you Directions *how you ought to walk*  
 “*and please GOD.* and I understand you have  
 “been careful to follow them. What is there  
 “more for me to desire, but that you should  
 “persist and persevere in this Course, and a-  
 “bound in it more and more? You have got  
 “over the principal Difficulties, in an hearty  
 “Conversion from Sin to GOD: You have  
 “felt the Power, and tasted the Pleasures of  
 “sound Religion. You have yet *rode it out*  
 “in a Storm of Persecution, have born up  
 “under sharp Trials, and withstood fierce Op-  
 “position. What should hinder your Con-  
 “stancy or farther Progress? I speak to Per-  
 “sons

sons experienced. You know what Supports, in an *evil Day*, may be fetched from the Conscience of divine Approbation: What ineffable Pleasure springs from the Integrity of a Man's Heart, the lively Performance of religious Duties, and the Smiles of a reconciled God. And will these Advantages diminish upon your Improvements in Religion? *The more you abound in pleasing GOD,* will not your Supports of this Kind be more powerful, and your Pleasures more relishing? Go on then, with Vigor and Resolution. Persist in the Course you have begun. Be diligent to improve in Likeness to God, *and abound in what will please Him.* It is your Duty, and the Performance of it will carry in it its own Reward. It will lighten your Burthens, and lessen your Fears; it will heighten your Pleasures, add Strength to your Trust in God, and enliven your Hopes of the heavenly Glory. And when you have such a Prospect before you, will you not be excited hereby to Diligence, and the *utmost Improvement*? *You have begun well,* and there is nothing now before you, but to go on and grow better every Day; *and what should hinder you?* This is the Scope and Force of the Apostle's Reasoning, from what went before. And how powerfully doth this Argument plead, with all in like Circumstances? But,

II. Secondly, THE *very endearing Appellation* given to those to whom he directs his Advice, is another Consideration which must very forcibly urge it upon them. *Brethren,* we beseech you, &c. Christians in general are the Children of our Father. They are born of God,

**SERM. XII.** and adopted into his Family: And by virtue of this Relation to one common Parent, they are an holy Fraternity. *All Brethren.* This is an Appellation frequently given them in the Apostolical Writings. Sometimes <sup>a</sup> *simply*, and sometimes with the Addition of proper *Epithets*, as <sup>b</sup> *holy Brethren*, <sup>c</sup> *faithful Brethren in Christ*. And when the Apostles and Primitive Christians call their Fellow-Christians by this Name, it is not merely to give them a distinctive Title. The Term carries in it a Signification of unfeigned and peculiar Affection: Such as the Apostle advises to, when he tells us we should <sup>d</sup> *add to Godliness brotherly Kindness*, and is meant when elsewhere it is required that <sup>e</sup> *brotherly Love continue*. So that when the Apostle addresses to the *Thessalonians* here as *Brethren*, it is as if he had said,

“ My dearly beloved, I am yours in the  
 “ Bonds of fraternal Relation. You and I are  
 “ *Children of the same Father*. We should be  
 “ knit together in the strongest Bonds of brotherly Love. Thus I feel mine own Heart  
 “ affected towards you: And I breath sincere  
 “ and warm Affection in this Advice. It is  
 “ not so much to shew *my Authority* over you,  
 “ as *my Good-will* to you, and my Concern for  
 “ your Welfare that I urge it upon you. I  
 “ know it to be for your Interest, your highest Interest to regard and pursue it. Had I  
 “ no brotherly Tenderneſs for you, I could  
 “ bear with your Ignorance, or Neglect of

<sup>a</sup> Acts xviii. 18. Chap.

xxii. 5. & *passim*.

<sup>b</sup> Heb. iii. 1. 1 Theſſ. v.

17.

<sup>c</sup> Col. i. 2.

<sup>d</sup> 2 Pet. i. 7.

<sup>e</sup> Heb. xiii. 1.

“ ſuch



“ such important Duty. But as I heartily love  
“ you, and wish your Welfare, I can’t be easy,  
“ when you seem drowzy and careless, about  
“ your spiritual Concerns, or your eternal Sal-  
“ vation, or slack in your Endeavours *to please*  
“ *your God*. Assure your selves, it is because  
“ I love you, and wish you well for Eternity,  
“ that I exhort you to this Duty. I should  
“ rejoice to see you in direct and diligent Pur-  
“ suit of the Perfection of Heaven, where  
“ God will be perfectly pleased by his Peo-  
“ ple; and therefore I now press you to *a-*  
“ *bound more and more in what will please Him*;  
“ the most proper Method that can be taken  
“ to attain this End, your selves being Judges.  
“ If you slight your own precious Souls, and  
“ your most important Interests, you may neg-  
“ lect this Advice. But if you truly love your  
“ selves, if your Affection for your selves e-  
“ choes to mine, it will urge the Advice over  
“ again on your Hearts, and that with more  
“ Force and *Emphasis*, as your selves are more  
“ nearly concerned in it, than I can be for you.  
“ But, whether you yield to the Authority of  
“ the Advice it self, whether you are touched  
“ with my Manner of addressing to you or no,  
“ whether you heed or despise the Charge;  
“ yet it is because you are my Brethren, and  
“ I love and regard you as such, that I leave  
“ it with you, and press it upon you. Nor  
“ can I bear to think you should receive it  
“ with Indifference. I know you can’t neg-  
“ lect it, but to your great and unspeakable  
“ Prejudice. Be but persuaded to love your  
“ selves as I love you, and be concerned for  
“ your Souls as I am; and then I am sure you  
“ will walk according to the Directions you  
“ have

SER. XII. "have received; and endeavour to *abound therein more and more.*" But,

III. *Thirdly*, THE *Form of this Address*, carries also a great deal of Weight and Force with it, let us go over the Particulars. And, (1. *First*,) It is delivered by *Way of Intreaty*. We beseech you Brethren. The Apostle here condescends, puts himself in a Manner on a Level with the *Thessalonians*, and intreats as if he had no Authority over them. He acts like a Friend tenderly concerned for them, desirous to see them do well, and offering the most pertinent Advice for this End. And to engage them to pursue it, he not only lays it down plainly, but follows it with earnest Intreaties, not *overbearing* them with Apostolical Power and Claims, but soliciting them with the most friendly and familiar Importunity. As if he had said,

"You are my Brethren. I love you. I am concerned for you. I wish you well; and therefore I beseech you regard the Advice I now give. Take it in, and closely and heartily pursue it. I have no selfish Ends to serve by it, but seek your Soul's Interest and eternal Salvation. And I am so much set upon your Good, that I could stoop to your very Feet, to bring you to a Liking of my good Advice, and a Compliance with it. Be persuaded to mind your own Interest, your best and highest Interest. I intreat you to do it with all the Earnestness I can. I am so concerned for you I cannot take a Denial. Do not send me away without mine Errand, and make me spend all my Persuasions and Importunities to no Purpose. Do I urge you to any Thing inconsistent with Reason,

“ Reason, to any Thing impertinent or unnecessary? Is it not very *proper*, is it not very  
 “ *important Advice* that I give you? *Judge in*  
 “ *your selves*, and act like Men. You know  
 “ I seek no Advantage to my self, but I persuade you to what is to the last Degree profitable to you. Yet am I so tenderly concerned for you, that your slighting this Advice will go to my Heart. If you have any Concern for your selves, if you have any Affection for me, shew it by your Regard to my Intreaties. Do not break my Heart by careless Self-neglect, but *fulfil my Joy* by chearful and ready Compliance. I cannot give over importuning you till I have prevailed. Be intreated, my dear Brethren, whom I love, and for whose Progress and Perfection in the spiritual Life, I vehemently long. Why should I bestow this Labour of Love upon you *in vain*? I beseech you,  
 “ *receive not the Grace of GOD in vain*, but  
 “ as you have been directed *how to walk and*  
 “ *please GOD*, look to it that ye *abound therein more and more*.” Thus may he be conceived to have pressed the Advice upon them in a Way of Intreaty.

(2. Secondly,) He urges it also with an *Air of Authority*. We *exhort you*, Brethren. Indeed the *Original* doth sometimes imply no more than *Intreaty*, whether by an Equal or Inferior, but often it is a Word of Authority and Command. It is frequently used by this Apostle in his Epistles to all the Churches, and that when he talks to them in the Apostolical

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‡ 2 Cor. vi. 1.



SERM. XII. Stile, and as a Minister acting by the highest Commission. And I think as a Word of Intreaty immediately precedes, this must be its most proper Sense here. It is as if He had said,

“ I speak to you with the Bowels of a Brother, with the tender Affection of a Friend.  
 “ I utter my very Heart when I intreat you to follow this Advice. It is the Voice of the sincerest Love, the Importunity of the most cordial Benevolence. But the Advice is not to be despised, because it is uttered *in the humble Strain* of intreating Love. I would by Kindness insinuate into your Regard and Affection; and, if I can carry my Point by soft Intréaties, would not constrain by Power. But such is my Concern for you, I would leave no Argument untouched. And therefore be it known to you, that I speak by Commission under the broad Seal of Heaven, and *charge you in the Name* of the great GOD, to regard what I say. It is not a Piece of Advice proceeding merely from Good-will, but is the Injunction of Authority. It is a Command from that LORD, whom you and I profess to serve. It is an awful Charge, which by special Order from Him, I leave with you; and if you slight or neglect it, 'twill be at your utmost Peril.  
 “ <sup>h</sup> *He among you who despiseth, despiseth not Man but GOD.* I therefore now raise my Voice, and put on the Air of Authority (though not so as to extinguish or abate my Affection) and *exhort* you to attend to the

“ Advice given, and comply with it. I am  
 “ pursuing my former kind Purposes, by speak-  
 “ ing to you now in a more commanding Man-  
 “ ner. I put forth the Authority of an Apo-  
 “ stle, that I may the better prevail with you  
 “ to do, what, I know, will be every way  
 “ for your highest Interest. I do not drop the  
 “ Friend and the Brother, yet must I also act  
 “ the Apostle, and let you know, you are not  
 “ at Liberty to neglect this Advice; but are  
 “ bound by the Authority of GOD himself,  
 “ both to heed and follow it, and that with  
 “ the utmost Care and Diligence. I therefore  
 “ inforce the Entreaties of one who loves you,  
 “ with the Authority of one who is <sup>i</sup> over you  
 “ in the LORD, and with the Exhortations  
 “ of an Apostle and Minister of GOD. Look  
 “ to it therefore that you take in the Advice I  
 “ give, and pursue it with the utmost Exact-  
 “ ness and Industry, lest you be found disobe-  
 “ dient, not to Man, but to GOD; Despisers  
 “ not of the *mere Counsel* of a Friend, but  
 “ the *awful Command* of our common Lord  
 “ and Master. As my beloved Brethren I in-  
 “ treat you, and, as a Part of that Flock over  
 “ which I am set, I exhort you, that as ye  
 “ have been taught *how to walk and please GOD*,  
 “ *so ye would abound therein more and more.*”  
 Again,

(3. *Thirdly,*) HE backs his Intreaties and Ex-  
 hortations with the *most powerful Consideration*  
 in the World, We beseech and exhort you, *by*  
*our Lord Jesus Christ*. A Name which a Chri-  
 stian should never hear without Love, and Re-

verence, and Wonder ; nor ever mention but with Honour. The Apostle not only urges them to comply with his Advice, by his own Love to them, and Concern for them, and by his Authority over them, but enforces these Considerations, with the much *dearer Love* and *higher Authority*, of their blessed Lord and Saviour. As if he had said,

“ I commend this Piece of Advice to you,  
 “ because I love you. For this very Reason,  
 “ I charge it upon you, with that Apostolical  
 “ Authority I have over you, for your Edifi-  
 “ cation. But if *my Affection* hath no Influ-  
 “ ence on you, if *my Authority* be slighted by  
 “ you, I have an Argument of much greater  
 “ Force still in Reserve. I do not charge this  
 “ upon you in mine own Name only, but in  
 “ the Name of our common Redeemer and  
 “ King. In his Name <sup>k</sup> *who hath loved Us,*  
 “ *and given himself for Us,* and to whom all  
 “ <sup>1</sup> *Judgment is committed by the Father,* and we  
 “ have submitted as our Lawgiver and LORD,  
 “ if we are Christians indeed. By Him I in-  
 “ treat and exhort you, to walk so as to please  
 “ GOD, and abound therein more and more.  
 “ By Him to whom you are already so deeply  
 “ indebted, and from whom you have so much  
 “ greater Expectations for the Time to come.  
 “ By Him, *whose you are,* and whom you  
 “ ought to obey and serve. If he hath any  
 “ Interest in you, any Hold of you, any Au-  
 “ thority over you : If you have received any  
 “ Benefit by Him, if you expect any farther  
 “ Advantage from Him, if you own your Sub-

<sup>k</sup> Gal. ii. 20.

<sup>1</sup> John v. 22.



“ jection to Him: *If* you have any Sense of  
 “ his Kindness, any Regard to his Command,  
 “ any Value for his Friendship and Favour,  
 “ you will heed the Advice I now give, em-  
 “ brace it with your whole Hearts, and pur-  
 “ sue it in your future Conduct, with the ut-  
 “ most Readiness, Zeal and Diligence. It is  
 “ the Counsel and Charge of our Lord Jesus  
 “ Christ. It is in his Name *I beseech and ex-*  
 “ *hort you*; it is in some Respect in his Stead,  
 “ most certainly it is by his Authority. In the  
 “ *Name*, and by the Authority of your Savi-  
 “ our and Sovereign, your best Friend, and  
 “ most rightful Lord. *Whom* you should  
 “ remember, and regard and please, out of a  
 “ Principle of grateful Love; *Whom* you  
 “ should readily obey from a Principle of chear-  
 “ ful Duty and Obedience; *Whom* you can-  
 “ not slight or disobey, without horrid Ingra-  
 “ titude and heinous Sin, nor indeed without  
 “ running the utmost Risque. Who can stand  
 “ your Friend, if he disowns you and casts you  
 “ off? And can you hope he will own you, or  
 “ plead your Cause, if you despise *his Counsel*,  
 “ or trample upon *his Command*? If you have  
 “ any Gratitude to him, any Affection for him,  
 “ any Reverence for his Majesty, or Regard  
 “ to his Command, nay, if you have true  
 “ Love to your selves, and Concern for your  
 “ most valuable Interests, shew it by giving  
 “ Heed to this Advice, and by a due Care to  
 “ pursue it. Your Conduct upon this Head  
 “ will make it appear, whether that dear and  
 “ powerful Name has any Interest in your Af-  
 “ fection, or Authority over you. It is the  
 “ Will of your Lord and Saviour, that, *as*  
 “ *you have received from Us how you ought to*  
 “ walk

*Apostolical Entreaties*

SERM. XII. “ *walk and please G O D, so you would abound therein more and more.* If you are Christians “ *in Sincerity* as you are *by Profession*, you can’t “ be indifferent how you act on such an Oc- “ *casión.*” This seems to be the Force of the Apostle’s Reasonings and Intreaties in this Passage.

AND how pertinent are all his *Topics*? What Weight and Force is there in every Particular? How can a Christian Heart withstand *any one* of them? But when they pour in upon it their united Force it will be irresistible. Here is the *good Advice* of an affectionate Brother, the *kind Intreaty* and *awful Charge* of an Apostle, and, to give the Address its full Strength, here is the *Love* and *Authority* of a Saviour annexed to all the rest, to make Impression on the Mind, and subdue the Heart. And what can fix an Advice on the Mind, or bend the Heart to Obedience, if these Considerations will not? If Regard to Interest, if Obligations to unparall’d Love, if Submission to acknowledged and absolute Authority, will not bow the Heart to willing and chearful Obedience, nothing can. And if these Arguments do not persuade, they will certainly leave without Excuse, and fix an indelible Stain of Guilt and Infamy.

THUS have I gone over the several Heads on which I propos’d to treat, from this Text. It remains that I make *some Improvement* of all, with some particular Regard to our *present Circumstances*.

YOU know I have laboured among you *in the Gospel* for several Years, and with as *much Acceptance* and *Respect*, through the Goodness of GOD, as I could reasonably wish; for which I now render you hearty and public Thanks. I wish

wish I could say it had been with equal Success; a Success proportioned to my reasonable Desires. It is very much your Concern to know what on *your Part* has hindered it, and your Duty with *sincere* Contrition, to lament your not improving the Helps you have had, to as great a Degree, as you might and ought. And the Regret you express at Parting will I hope forward this Effect. I own indeed that *all the Blame* is not *yours*. And if *GOD humbles Me among you*, that so few have been converted by my Ministry, or that any one Soul has been hardened under it; and that those who are truly converted from Sin to *GOD*, have made no greater Proficiency in Religion, or Progress towards Heaven, it is what the *many Defects* of my Ministerial Performances most justly deserve. Weak Faith of the great Doctrines I have taught, Want of Zeal for *GOD*, and Affection to precious Souls, Pride and Selfishness have too often corrupted my Services, and hindered the good Fruit, which might else have been expected from them. Yet this, I hope, I can say, I have not *corrupted the Word* of *GOD*, nor *kept back any thing* from you, which was necessary or fit for you to know, or do. I have faithfully informed you, as I was able, how *you ought to walk and please GOD*; not indeed by Revelation from *GOD*, and with Apostolical Authority, but, as I have been enabled, my self, to get Information from the Word of *GOD*. And I have *intreated and exhorted you by our LORD Jesus Christ*, to follow the Directions I have given you. I have in these Discourses, gone over the most general of these Directions, to leave them with you, as my *parting Advice and Charge*. What-



**SERM. XII.** ever Regard you may have paid to former Exhortations, let Me now *beseech and exhort you by our LORD Jesus Christ*, to heed and follow the Advice I leave with you, and succeed in my Requests. I am speaking <sup>m</sup> *Words by which you may be saved*, which you cannot disregard without heinous Contempt of G O D, and extreme Hazard to your selves: That is, without the very last Degree of Sin and Folly. <sup>n</sup> *Hear, therefore, that your Souls may live.*

Y O U may easily perceive by looking back to the First of these Discourses, That different Directions are to be given, according to the different Conditions, in which Men are. Those who continue Strangers and Enemies to G O D, and therefore are in no immediate Disposition or Capacity to please Him, must first be directed how to get their present Indispositions remedied and removed. This is *their* first Business. Others, who are got over this Difficulty, are fitted to receive farther Directions. I hope I speak to several who came under this last Character. Would to G O D I could fairly hope it concerning all. How much would it rejoice my Heart to be able to say at Parting, that I leave not one unbelieving or impenitent Sinner among you. But is there Room, my Friends, for such Hope? Have you all given convincing Proof, by your Conversation and Way of Life, that you are *born from above*, and have *your Treasure and Hearts in Heaven*? I dare not say such Evidence has appeared to me, as I would not be found at last a Betrayer of your precious Souls. And I hope none of

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■ Acts xi. 14.

■ Esai. lv. 3.

you will put a Cheat on your selves, and conceal it is all well between GOD and You, when you were never yet changed, or *cleansed from your Wickedness*. Give me Leave therefore to press this Advice on you upon *sad Supposition*, that there may be some among you who are still impenitent in Sin, and destitute of saving Faith in Christ; as also with *pleasing Hope* that there are others, who have turned from Sin to GOD, and believed to the Salvation of their Souls. And,

I. *First*, LET me address to such as have hitherto continued in their Sins, and remain *Enemies to GOD by wicked Works*. *Whether* your wicked Conversation be *open and obvious* to the World, or *private and concealed* from all, but GOD and your own Consciences: *Whether* you are convinced in your own Minds, that you are yet in your Sins, and liable to the Wrath of GOD for them; or through damning Ignorance, or dangerous Mistake, of the Nature of Religion, or your own true Condition, are confident all is well between GOD and you, and that you are the Friends and Favourites of Heaven. Let me first prevail upon you to *know your selves*: Your true State, your heinous Guilt, your frightful Danger. Do not, out of fond and foolish Pity to your selves, shun what is so necessary to your Escape. Be your Sins never so many or heinous, the Vengeance due to them never so dreadful or near; how angry soever the righteous and holy GOD may be with you, how terrible soever his Threatnings against you may be, there is yet Room for Reconciliation: His Favour and Friendship may be regained, and a certain Method taken by you to please Him.

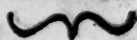
SERM. XII.

Two Things are more especially needful for this Purpose in your Case. (1. *First,*) That you solicit his Favour, in the prevailing Name of Jesus Christ, ° the only Mediator between GOD and Man. He must be received as your Mediator with GOD, and only Saviour, by humble and cordial Trust in Him, and Reliance on him, and by free and full Consent to be his: His Disciples, his Subjects, his Servants, nay, the very Members of his Body, quickened and inhabited by his holy Spirit. And upon this Acceptance of Christ, as your Saviour and LORD, you must intreat the Favour and Friendship of GOD in his dear and prevailing Name. (2. *Secondly,*) You must utterly P forsake your wicked Ways and Thoughts, and turn to the LORD your GOD. You must quit the Service of the Devil, you must renounce this evil World, you must abjure and forsake your dearest and best beloved Lusts, and yield up your selves, Soul, Body and Spirit to the Command of GOD, and the Regulation of his holy Law. With hearty Remorse for all your past Omissions and Transgressions, and bitter Lamentations over them at the Feet of GOD, you must turn from them, and be fixed in your Purpose (by the Help of divine Grace) to avoid them all without Exception or Reserve for the Time to come, and to conform your selves in all Things to the Will of GOD, made known in his Word. Or, to say the Thing in fewer Words, you must repent of your Sins, you must believe in Christ, and through him yield your selves up to GOD. If you would more

° 1 Tim. ii. 5.

P Esai. lv. 7.



fully know what this implies, look back to the SERM. XII. first Discourse from these Words, where it is more fully explained. 

THIS is the Advice, the Charge I leave with all among you, who are yet in their Sins, and <sup>1</sup> *alienated from the Life of GOD*, whether they are openly vitious and profane, or so secret as to be concealed from the World, and perhaps deceived into a good Opinion of Themselves. All you who never were thoroughly convinced of the evil of Sin, nor have been made sensible of the Terrors of divine Wrath, and your need of a *Jesus* to save you from it, or at least have never been persuaded to accept him *in all his Offices*, with all his Blessings and Benefits, and yield your selves up to his Conduct and Command, and the Influences of his holy Spirit: All you who make it not the grand Concern of your Minds, and Labour of your Lives, *to please GOD*: To you I now address my self, I intreat, I exhort, I charge you to repent of your Sins, and accept of Christ and Salvation by him, upon the Terms of the Gospel, and that immediately, and without farther Delay.

CAN any Advice be *more proper*, or indeed *more necessary*? Is it possible GOD should ever favour, or bless, or take Pleasure in those, who <sup>2</sup> *neglect the great Salvation* of the Gospel, pour Contempt on the bleeding Love of his only begotten Son, and continue in their Sins, Rebels against his Government, and Haters of his Purity and Laws? Must not they be *under his Curse*, who for these Reasons are displeasing to

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<sup>1</sup> Eph. iv. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. ii. 3.

**SERM. XII.** Him? And can you escape this Curse, or bear up under it? Will it not sink you to Hell by its Weight? Do you not now stand on the Brink of eternal Death? — And yet stand fearless and unconcerned! What shocking Stupidity is this! As you value your Lives, your precious Souls, your everlasting Salvation, think of your Danger, and make haste to escape it. Many of you have often been called upon to do thus to no Purpose; let not this fresh Exhortation also be in vain. *Necessity is upon you, and woe to you if you flight it.*

IT is certainly the *kindest Advice* can be given you. As it is necessary to be regarded, that you may escape eternal Vengeance; so, on the other Hand, the most amiable Prospect will open to you, upon complying with it. This is the certain Way to *please GOD*. To be accepted of *GOD*. Whilst you continue in your present State, he will accept no Services you tender, nor any Offerings you bring him; but were you once persuaded to <sup>f</sup> *receive Christ Jesus the LORD*, as your *LORD* and Saviour, and <sup>t</sup> *yield your selves up to GOD* by him, how acceptable would this <sup>u</sup> *living Sacrifice* be? How pleasing this *reasonable Service*? All your Services in Religion would then be recommended, and *rendered acceptable* by the Merits and Intercession of his beloved Son.

NAY, you would hereupon become the Objects of *his Complacency*. You would be his Delight. His Soul would have Pleasure in you. He would <sup>x</sup> *rejoice over you to do you Good*, all the Good you could reasonably wish. He

<sup>f</sup> Col. ii. 6.

<sup>t</sup> Rom. vi. 13.

<sup>u</sup> Rom. xii. 1.

<sup>x</sup> Deut. xxx. 9.

would

would be a Friend and a Father to you. He would be conversible and familiar with you. He would be your Guide and Guard whilst you pass the waste and howling Wilderness, the <sup>y</sup> *Strength of your Hearts, when Flesh and Heart shall fail*, and your full and satisfying *Portion for ever*. He would help you in every Duty. He would stand by you in every Trial. He would succour you in every Temptation. He would support you under every Suffering. He would meet you, and bless you in every Ordinance. He would comfort you in every Condition. In a Word, he would carry you safely through this Life, and conduct you at last to eternal Life and Glory. He would be <sup>z</sup> *your GOD*, and make *you his People*. He would be <sup>a</sup> *your Father*, and *you the Sons and Daughters of the LORD Almighty*.

WHAT vast Advantage would accrue from your pursuing this Advice? And is it not the most friendly and kind Advice, when it is so manifestly advantageous, and yet altogether disinterested? Have you any Value for your Souls? I am persuading you to take that Method which alone can save them. Do you know how <sup>b</sup> *terrible a Thing it is to fall into the Hands of the Living GOD*, and have Him who made you, who made the World, your declared Enemy? I am urging you to shun his Vengeance, and seek a Reconciliation. Do you know, can you imagine, how secure and happy a Condition it is, to have GOD your Friend? To have almighty Power engaged to protect you, infinite Wisdom to chuse, and boundless Benefi-

<sup>y</sup> Psalm lxxiii. 26.

<sup>z</sup> Heb. viii. 10.

<sup>a</sup> 2 Cor. vi. 18.

<sup>b</sup> Heb. x. 31.



SERM. XII.

cence and Fulness to provide for you, and the Heart of *Love it self*, original and immense Love, set upon you? To this secure and blessed State I now invite you, and that in the Name of GOD. I am inviting you to dwell under the *Shadow of his Wings*, under the Influences of his Spirit, under the Care of his paternal Providence, and in the Light of his Countenance on Earth, and to be happy for ever in his Enjoyment in Heaven. Doth not this Advice carry Love and Good-will, the tenderest Love, and the most cordial Good-will in the very Face of it? — And yet shall I leave you unresolved? Shall I leave you desperately bent on ruining your own Souls, and rejecting the Grace and offered Favour of GOD? He swears by himself, *that he has no Pleasure in your Death; but rather that you would turn and live.* Why, therefore, will ye die? Why are you so averse to your own Interest, your greatest and most important Interests? So hardly persuaded to be saved?

HAVE you a *Word of Reason* to offer, in Defence of your Neglect and Delay? Is any Thing required of you that is unjust? What your Maker and Saviour hath no Right to demand? Hath he no Claim to your Allegiance, your Love, your Devotion or Obedience? Can you have the Face to charge GOD with such Injury as this, I mean asking more than is his Due? And if not, can you have the Heart to do him open Wrong, by refusing him, what you cannot but acknowledge, is owing from you? Is not this heinous and provoking Sacrilege?

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<sup>c</sup> Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

CAN you say the *Terms of Reconciliation* SERM. XII. which he proposes are *hard and unreasonable*, and that the Favours he offers will be too dearly procured upon those Terms? And what are these hard and rigorous Terms? Why, we “ must part withour Sins, all our Sins without “ Exception, even our most fondling and be- “ loved Lusts and Inclinations. That is to say, you must vomit up the Poison you have taken down. You must shake off your Shackles. You must renounce the most abject Slavery, and be made spiritually Free, *Free in Christ*. And are these such mighty Hardships? Is this rigorous Exaction, or exorbitant Demand? It is true you must also thankfully own your selves Debtors to your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, for the Pardon of Sin, the Friendship of GOD, the Hope of Heaven, and your spiritual Life here on Earth: And must for the Time to come live and act in Dependence on Him. But do you know how else to get Sin pardoned, and GOD reconciled, your own Hearts sanctified, and the Doors of Heaven opened? And if not, can your proud Hearts call this a rigorous and unreasonable Proposal? Such as all the glorious Privileges to be gained by this Regard to a Redeemer, will not countervail? Would you be saved by Christ, and yet under no Obligations, to give *Him* the Honour of your Salvation?

BUT “ we are required to *deny our selves* if “ we would be Christ’s Disciples, and <sup>d</sup> take “ *up our Cross and follow him*. We must, if “ called out to it, sit down content with the

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<sup>d</sup> Matth. xvi. 24.

SERM. XII.

“ Loss of all our worldly Comforts. We must  
 “ suffer patiently for Him: Be ready to shed  
 “ our Blood in his Cause, and lay down our  
 “ Lives for his sake; and that not in the Heat  
 “ of Battle, but in cold Blood, and with the  
 “ calmest Deliberation.” And is there any  
 Thing in this unjust or unreasonable? Are you  
 the independent Proprietors of what you pos-  
 sess? Are you any better than *Tenants at Will*  
 to the great LORD of the World? And should  
 you not be willing to hold your Possessions, at  
 his Pleasure? And resign *without Regret*, what  
*He claims*, to whom your selves and all you  
 have belong? May <sup>e</sup> *he not do what he will*  
*with his own*? And take, or require you to re-  
 sign, what he gave, with a Reserve to his own  
 sovereign Right and Property? Would you  
 not be guilty of open and heinous Injury, if  
 you with-held what *is his*, or made a Difficul-  
 ty of yielding it up when he claims it? Yet he  
 makes you a Promise of full and ample Com-  
 pensation, for *any Damage* you shall suffer, or  
*any Expence* you shall be at, for his sake. And  
 is the Favour of GOD, and his fatherly Affec-  
 tion; are the eternal Pleasures and Glories of  
 Heaven, such <sup>f</sup> *little Things* in your Account,  
 that you should buy them dearly with your  
 Blood? Are any worldly Hazards too great  
 to be balanced by such important Gains? Doth  
 it not discover *gross Ignorance*, or *notorious In-*  
*fidelity*, to doubt on which side the Advantage  
 lies? Are the vain, fulsom and vanishing Plea-  
 sures of Sin, or the little transient Interests of  
 this World, worthy to stand in Competition

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• Matth. xx. 15.

• Matth. xix. 29.



with the Smiles of a reconciled GOD, and an *eternal Weight of Glory*? And have you utterly forgotten, how much your blessed LORD denied himself, for your sake? When it was impossible he should be under any Obligations to you, or have any Prospect of Requital from you? Would he who <sup>h</sup> *was in the Form of GOD, take upon him the Form of a Servant, empty himself and become of no Reputation, undergo a voluntary Poverty, and offer Himself to a shameful and cruel Death for your sakes? --* And after all you make a Difficulty of denying your selves for Him, when you are under the utmost Obligations to Him, and have the Assurance of such *immense Reward*? Is this fit or equitable, is it just or grateful, your own Consciences being Judges? For Shame, away with this Pretence. It carries open Injury, base Ingratitude, nay, and stupid Self-neglect in its very Front. But

YOU may have it still suggested to you by a corrupt Heart, and a cunning Tempter, "that however necessary it may be to believe in Christ, and repent of Sin, it is *yet Time enough*. We may a little longer defer this necessary Work without any Danger. GOD is ready at all Times to receive a returning Sinner to Mercy." But those of you who for forty or fifty Years of Life have been Drudges to the World, and Slaves to Sin, must be stupid to the last Degree, if you think the Time past is not sufficient, to have *served divers Lusts and Pleasures*. Sure when you have been in a dead Sleep so long, it is high Time

<sup>s</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 16.

<sup>h</sup> Phil. ii. 6, 7.

to awake. And if ever you purpose to seek after GOD, it is reasonable you should do it out of Hand. Would you have the Sun set, and the Day of Life done, before ever you set about the proper Business of Life? Or will it ever be a *proper Season*, in your Esteem, to leave your Sins, and return to GOD, if you can now persuade your selves it is reasonable to delay, when so much of Life is run out, and you are under some Conviction, that this Advice must be complied with, some Time or other? Must you repent of your Sins, and believe in a Saviour some Time or other, or perish for ever, and can you put off this to a *more convenient Time*? Is not this a manifest Snare and Artifice of the Devil, to prevent its being done at all? Have you not done flagrant Wrong to GOD, in wasting so much of his Time already, and living so long *alienated from his Life*, and Service? Are you not at this Time convinced of this Injury in your own Consciences? And is it not provoking to the last Degree, for you to declare a Purpose of continuing the Wrong, under such Conviction? And yet this is the plain and certain Meaning, of its being *yet Time enough*, to hearken to this Advice. For GOD's sake do not trifle with your selves, in so momentous a Matter as the everlasting Salvation of your precious Souls, nor provoke him afresh, by postponing again, your great and chief Business. If *you* do not now think it a *convenient Time*, it is justly to be suspected that the *convenient Time* in your Account will never come.

AND though such of you, as are now in the Vigor of Youth, with all your warm Blood about you, may (at least in your own Esteem) make

make this Excuse with a better Grace, and with more Security defer your Repentance and Return to GOD, yet will you also be guilty of *extreme Folly*, and *heinous Sin*, if you give into the Sentiment. When you your selves have duly considered the Matter, you must be convinced of this Truth. For, have you any Lease of Life? Are you sure you shall live till to Morrow? Did you never know any die at your Age? And have you any *Privilege of Exemption* from the same Stroke? And if you should die to Morrow, will you not perish, and be lost for ever, if you comply not with the Exhortation I am now giving?

AND is not *all your Time*, properly speaking, *GOD's Time*? To be spent in his Service, and according to his Direction and Pleasure? The *Time of Youth*, as well as of maturer Age? And is it not great Unfaithfulness then to GOD, and using Him very ill to put off his Business, as if you were not under his Command, or waste *his Time*, as if you owed Him no Account of its Expence? Would any Man take it well of a Servant to be thus used, and have that Time, which he expects to be employed in his *own Business*, either lavishly wasted in mere Idleness, or appropriated by the Servant to his own Purposes? And is not this Conduct of yours, in Effect to declare, that you are Lords of your own Time, and your own Acts, and GOD has no Right to prescribe to you in one or the other? This is adding *fresh Injury* to your former Impenitence. And to do this under Conviction of your past Guilt, and the Necessity of renouncing your Sins, and returning to your Duty and Allegiance, is downright Contempt of GOD. It is in Effect



SERM. XII. *W* to declare, that though you know you are doing GOD the utmost Wrong, you will yet *for a Season*, at least persist in it, and for any Thing you know for ever. And must not such contemptuous Insolence be very provoking? Or can that Course be prudent or safe that is so provoking? Were it not very righteous in GOD to forsake those who proceed in this Manner, and give them up to the Devices of their own Hearts?

AND can you still find in your Hearts, to put off this Work till hereafter? Can any Time be *more convenient* or fit, than when GOD is calling on you by his Word, and striving with you by his Spirit, and your own Hearts feel tender and yielding under his gracious Influences and Impressions? Should these Impressions *wear off again*, and the Convictions now upon your Minds languish and die, can you have any Assurance of their Revival? <sup>i</sup> *Now is the accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation.* But if you let this Season slip, it may be gone past Recovery.— And would any but Fools or Madmen put their eternal Interests to so desperate a Risque? Oh let these Considerations prevail with all you who are young, before you grow hardened in your wicked Courses, and whilst yet your Hearts are tender and melting, to hearken to the Calls of the Gospel, and seek to be reconciled to GOD in Christ. <sup>k</sup> *To Day if you will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts.* I would not willingly leave any one of you in a State of Infidelity or Alienation from GOD. But whether you

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<sup>i</sup> 2 Cor. vi. 2.

<sup>k</sup> Heb. iii. 15.

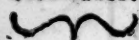
will bear or forbear, I have endeavoured to de- SERM. XII.  
 liver mine own Soul. ~

II. Secondly, LET me speak to those among you, *who have repented of your Sins, and believed in Christ.* Who have accepted him as your Saviour, in the Method of the Gospel, and have for his sake renounced and forsaken your Sins, even those which did once <sup>1</sup> *most easily beset you*, and were best beloved; and by Him have been brought back to G O D. I would rejoice with you, and over you; more especially those who have been begotten to G O D by my Ministry. Some such I hope there are. Alas! that they have been so few! But it is not enough for you to have begun well. You must go forward, and *hold out to the End, if you would be saved.* Look to it, that you continue *to walk and please G O D*, as you have received, and *abound therein more and more.* You have in the Course of my Ministry, been more fully instructed how to do this, and in these Discourses I have gone over briefly the chief Heads of Instruction necessary for you to mind and follow. May what hath now, and heretofore, been delivered in your Hearing to this Purpose, be for ever *kept in the Imagination of your Hearts*, and shew forth its Power and Influence in your Conversation, that when I am gone from you, I may hear well of you, and have much Ground to hope I have not *laboured among you in vain.* Attend to the Particulars insisted upon, and follow them closely. Let not this parting Advice be lost.

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<sup>1</sup> Heb. xii. 1.

SERM. XII.



**LIVE with GOD.** Under due and deep Regard to his Omnipresence, and exact Inspection of your whole Conduct, that you may with great Care shun whatever will displease Him, and make it your great Endeavour in all you do to approve your selves to Him. You are by his Grace brought into a State of Friendship with Him. Labour to keep up this holy and honourable Acquaintance. Converse much with GOD, and endeavour to enjoy *both the Benefit and Pleasure* of such a Correspondence.

**LIVE upon GOD.** In continual Dependence on his Power and Love, for Supplies and Supports of all Kinds. Confess your own Emptiness and Indigence, and take a Pleasure in owning your selves Debtors to GOD, *for all your good Things*, bodily and spiritual. And speak out these humble and becoming Sentiments, in devout Prayers and Thanksgivings. Nay, let GOD be the very Life and chosen Portion of your Souls. Live upon Him as the Spring of your Happiness: As that Object in whose Enjoyment even singly and by its self, your Minds may be fully easy and blest, and without whom the Enjoyment of the whole World, would leave them desolate and wretched.

**LIVE constantly and chearfully subject to divine Authority.** Reckon it your Advantage to be under GOD's Command, and to be obliged to live and act by his Directions and Rules. Prefer such a State of Subjection before a Liberty to act as you list. It is really better. There is infinite Reason why the Great GOD should prescribe to his rational Creatures, govern them, and have the Regulation of their Conduct;



Conduct : But it is the most absurd Thing in the World, for them to take this Power out of their Maker's Hands, and presume to act, as if they were under no Bonds of Duty or Subjection to Him. And whatever is thus absurd in it self, must be *unnatural* to a reasonable Being conscious of his own Acts and their Quality, and therefore whenever he makes Reflections on what he has done, must be *uneasy* too. But to act what is right and rational, will give Satisfaction *in the Season* of Performance, and double that Satisfaction on a Review. Be convinced then, that to be under the Regulations of divine Laws, is every Way preferable to a State of lawless Liberty. You know it to be so, for you have tried. Live therefore, and take Pleasure in living, subject to divine Authority, and in Obedience to GOD's Commands. And finally,

LIVE for *the Glory and Honour of GOD*. Prefer this to all Interests and Pleasures of your own. Let it be much more your Concern to honour GOD, than to please or humour, to profit or enrich your selves. Be ready to resign and sacrifice the dearest Possession and Enjoyment of Life, nay to *lay down Life* it self, rather than in any one Instance deliberately dishonour and disobey Him. And, as much as possible, make the Honour of GOD the great Scope of your Life, the ultimate End of all you do. <sup>m</sup> *Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the Glory of GOD*. Leave not this Design out of the most vulgar Affair you manage in Life.

SERM. XII.

*W* THIS is the Way in which GOD *must be pleased*. Which you who are Believers have chosen for this End. Keep to it in the Name of GOD, and proceed in it. Be stedfast in your good Purposes, and unmoveable from them. Resolve that, by the Grace of GOD, nothing shall discourage you in this Way, or turn you from it. Be in earnest for Heaven, and put forth all your Strength and Vigor in Pursuit of it. It is your great Business to please GOD. See that you make it such. Set your selves to it with all your Might, and with *all Diligence* and <sup>n</sup> *Patience run the Race that is set before you,* and <sup>o</sup> *work out your Salvation*.

AND, suffer not your selves to grow heavy or heartless in your Christian Walk. It is the noblest and most delightful Employment for a well-disposed Mind. It is the most laudable Ambition of a Creature to please GOD, *i. e.* to have his Acceptance and Approbation, and become the Object of his Delight. It cannot soar higher without being wild and extravagant. And when a Man is once fixed for the noblest End, every direct Step taken towards it, must spring Pleasure in his Mind. And is it becoming in a Christian, to set about any Branch of this Work, or pursue it, with a *Chill at his Heart*, or a Numbness in his Hands? Should he not be all Life, by being all over chearful and delighted in it? Look to it then that you make *the pleasing GOD your Happiness*, as well as *your Business*, and then you will not drudge at it as a Task, nor bear it as a Burthen, but will relish it as an Entertainment,

<sup>n</sup> Heb. xii. 1.<sup>o</sup> Phil. ii. 12.

and be ravished with it as your highest Pleasure. SERM. XII.

THIS will make it more easy to be *constant and persevering* in your holy Purposes and Pursuits, which I must also press upon you, as what is absolutely necessary to the continual pleasing GOD in this World, and his final and everlasting Fruition in the World to come. If *p* you draw back, GOD will have no Pleasure in you. You must not so much as look back, with any allowed Inclination, towards your former Course of Life, towards your old Sins and Lusts. They must be abandoned utterly, and for ever. They must be pursued with deadly Displeasure, such as will admit of no Reconciliation, nor so much as a Truce. And in the Way of Holiness and Obedience into which you have entered, you must persevere to the End, whatever Opposition you meet with, or whatever Hazards you run, upon this Account. *q* Hold fast, therefore, the Profession of your Faith without wavering. *r* Continue in the Faith as those who are grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the Hopes of the Gospel, by forsaking the Paths of evangelical Purity, or going astray from GOD.

AND let me press you with all Seriousness and Concern to improve in all the Branches of the Christian Life, and *abound in what will please GOD*. Be not content with your present Attainments in Knowledge or Holiness, but be *going forward to Perfection*. Grow more averse to Sin, to all Appearance of Evil. Live in more close and delightful Dependence

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*p* Heb. x. 38.

*q* Verse 23.

*r* Col. i. 23.



SERM. XII. on the Mediator, and endeavour to feel more of the powerful Influences and Constraints of this Love. Live more *with G O D*, under a deeper and more constant Sense of his Presence, and more awful Regard to it in your whole Conduct, and in a closer Intimacy and Friendship with Him. Live more *upon G O D* in more full, and continual, and chearful Dependence on Him, for Body and Soul, for Time and Eternity, and especially endeavour to live more upon Him as He is the chief Good, or *objective Happiness* of Spirits. Affect and aspire more after being <sup>f</sup> *filled with his Fulness*, and ravished and satisfied with his Love. Labour to be more *fully subject* to his Authority, and more thoroughly devoted to his Service and Pleasure, to become more ready for the Performance of every Duty, and more punctual and exact in it, and more thoroughly willing to be Poor or Rich, honoured or contemned; in a Word, to be *any Thing* or *Nothing*, so his Will be done. And finally live more than *ever* for G O D. More heartily prefer his Interests to your own, and more directly aim at his Glory in all your Actions, in every particular Action, whether common or religious. Labour more heartily to refer every Thing you do to this last End, and noblest Purpose of your Life and Being.

AND in Order to this be much in the Practice of all these Duties. Exercise your selves to them. Look on Religion as the *chief Business*, and most *momentous Affair* of Life, and be much in religious Exercises. It is by frequent

Acts you must strengthen holy Habits. Yet never set about this Work in your own Strength. Call in the Influences of divine Grace, by frequent and fervent Prayer. Let your Souls be every Day on the Wing towards Heaven, and imploring and fetching in Supplies of spiritual Life, from GOD in this Duty. It is the *very Breath* of a dependent Being, as necessary in a manner to its Subsistence, as Respiration is to bodily Life. Let it therefore be solemnly and statedly performed by you, in private and in your Families. And often when your Hands are full of other Business, let your Hearts make their Escape from it, and, in a strong Breath of holy Desire, ascend towards GOD. Neglect none of the Means of Grace, but diligently use and attend on all, whether private, as *Reading, Meditation, Prayer, &c.* or public, as the *Preaching* of the Word, the united Prayers and Thanksgivings of assembled Saints, and the Administration of the Sacraments. Be persuaded to *keep holy* the LORD'S-Day, and to esteem and improve it as the most rich and happy Opportunity for your Souls. Make Conscience of devoting this Time to Offices of Religion: And reckon it no needless Restraint, or grievous Confinement, to spend one Day in seven after this holy Manner, when you would encourage your selves to hope for celestial Happiness hereafter, which must all result from the Perfection of our holy Services, and is spoken of as an *eternal* <sup>c</sup> *Sabbatism*.

AND let no one of you who in Truth and Sincerity make it your Endeavour to please

<sup>c</sup> Heb. iv. 9. Σαββατισμός.

**SERM. XII.** GOD, live in the Neglect of the *holy Sacrament of the Supper*, or omit to renew your Covenant with your GOD and Saviour, at that great Solemnity. How can you hope to improve in a divine Temper, or *abound in the Work of the LORD*, if you neglect the most important Mean, appointed by Him for carrying on this Design? If you are on a Journey for Heaven, do not neglect the best Helps upon the Road.

THIS is the parting Advice I would give you. The very best Advice I can give you. Were these to be my last Words (and they may be so to you) I know not what I could press upon you of greater, or indeed of equal Importance. Or what is more proper to recommend to your most serious Thoughts. Let me prevail with you to have a due Regard to what has been said: To weigh it and consider it well: To take in all those Impressions it should make upon you, and closely to follow the Directions I have given you. And to promote this good Effect, let me bespeak you in a few Words, after the Manner of the Apostle in my Text.

I. *First*, It is *in Love to your Souls*, and out of very tender Concern for your best Interests, that I speak thus to you. It is because I wish you well for ever. I am promoting no *selfish Ends* by it. I have no private Interests to carry on among you by this Talk. It is not *spiritual Traffic*, for my own secular Gain and Advantage. When I am leaving you, all Expectations of that Kind cease of Course. I hope I have given you no just Occasion, in any Part of my past Conduct, to think I have been acted by such vile Principles, or carrying on such  
low



low Ends. But now I am removing, and can have no farther Expectations of any worldly Advantage, from you, Malice it self can't suspect Me of any such Design. It is not because *I seek my self*, but your Salvation that I thus speak. It is because I love you, as I am bound to do by the strongest Ties (the Command of G O D, the Example of my blessed L O R D and Master, my Relation to you, and your Kindness to me and mine) that I leave this Advice with you, and press it upon you. I wish your eternal Welfare. I am solicitous for it. I know you cannot be happy, you must be lost and wretched for ever, if this Advice *be utterly neglected*. And you will suffer Damage in your greatest and best Interests in Proportion to your Neglects. I am acting the Friend. The Words I utter are the Dictates of Affection. You are upon mine Heart for good, and therefore have I thus spoken. Oh let the Advice of a sincere Friend, the parting, perhaps, the last Advice, of one who wishes you well for ever, insinuate into your Hearts, and engage your most serious Regard. If you have any Love for me (and can I doubt it when you shew such Regret at Parting?) shew it by hearkening to this cordial and affectionate Advice. But I,

II. *Secondly, SPEAK to you in the Name of Christ*. It is as if He did beseech you by me. It is in Love to you that I urge this Advice, but you must not think it a Matter of Liberty, which you may regard or neglect as you please. I speak not to you in mine own Name, but *in the Name* of our common L O R D. It is the Charge of your Redeemer and King. Indeed I come not with *immediate Powers* from Him,  
nor

**SERM. XII.** nor with *the Assurance* and *Authority* of an Apostle, but I can appeal to you, whether what I am urging on you be not his Will plainly delivered in his Word? Remember therefore that I press my Advice to you, *in the Name of Christ*, and demand your Regard to it, and Compliance with it: The dearest and *most commanding* Name, that can be mentioned to a Christian.

IT is in the Name of your *blessed Saviour*,  
 " *who loved you, and gave himself for you* ;  
 who shed his *own Blood*, his Heart's Blood to  
 \* *wash you from your Sins*. Who laid down his  
 Life for you, not when you were Friends but  
 Enemies: Not of Constraint but willingly :  
 Not from any Obligation to you, but after he  
 had been most heinously affronted, disobliged  
 and injured by you. Have you any Sense of  
 his Kindness, and yet refuse to follow his Ad-  
 vice? Remember then that

IT is in the Name of your *rightful Sovereign*,  
 † *who died, and rose, and revived, that he might*  
*be LORD both of the Dead and the Living*.  
 Who hath bought you for himself with the  
 Price of his own Life, and had and continues  
 to have an antecedent Right in you, and Au-  
 thority over you, as you are the Creatures of  
 his Power. And hath this Name no Influence  
 on you, no Authority over you? Can you dare  
 to refuse Submission to his Will? Let me add  
 then farther that

IT is in the Name of your *righteous Judge*,  
 whose final Sentence must determine your eter-  
 nal Fate, and who will e're long call you to

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‡ Gal. ii. 20.

\* Rev. i. 5.

† Rom. xiv. 9.

an Account, for the Regard you pay to this very Charge. Can you think of <sup>2</sup> *appearing before the Judgment-Seat of Christ*, and yet be deaf to his Advice, and disobedient to his Command?

III. *Lastly*, I would speak to you *in any Way most likely to prevail*. I beseech you to take this Method to please GOD, and *abound therein more and more*. I intreat you with all possible Affection and Tendernefs. I could fall on my Knees and beg you, that you would regard this Advice, and pursue it. Though I have no Interest in it, farther than this, that it would be the Joy of my Soul, to see you all on the Way to Heaven, yet I bear you such Goodwill, that I could intreat your Compliance with the Advice I give, with the *lowest Submission*, as well as with the utmost Earnestness. For GOD's sake be persuaded to be such Friends to your selves, to your Souls, the most valuable Parts of your selves by far, as to fall in heartily with the best Advice that can be given you, and pursue it closely.

BUT if you will not hearken to *compassionate Intreaties*, remember that I can raise my Voice, and speak to you with the Authority (though not of an Apostle, yet) of a Minister of Christ. As such, I *exhort*, I *charge* you to walk according to the Directions given here, *and to please GOD*. As you will answer it at the great Day of Accounts, when, GOD forbid, you and I should stand forth and be mutual Accusers, look to it that you observe and follow them. I leave this in Charge with you,

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<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. v. 10.



**SERM. XII.** perhaps the last Charge I shall ever deliver to you from G O D. May the Fountain of all Grace, in whose Name, and by whose Authority, I deliver this Charge, make so deep an Impression of it on every Heart, that you may all receive it with the greatest Readiness, and pay the most serious and strict Regard to it in your future Conduct, that when I am removed from you, I may yet rejoice to hear of your  
*• walking in the Truth, as you have received Commandment from the Father, and you, when you come to give up your Account, may do it  
 • with Joy, and not with Grief.*

*Grant this, most merciful G O D, for the sake of Christ Jesus our L O R D, to whom be Glory and Honour for ever. Amen.*

• 2 John 4.

• Heb. xiii. 17.



*The*



*The Judgments of GOD on Others,  
how abused, and how to be im-  
proved.*

A

# S E R M O N.

Preached at *HACKNET*, Thursday  
February 22. 1721-2.



LUKE xiii. latter part of ver. 4. and ver. 5.  
*Think ye that they were Sinners above all  
Men that dwelt at Jerusalem? I tell  
you, Nay: But unless ye repent, ye shall  
all likewise perish.*



THESE Words of our blessed Sa- SERM. XII.  
viour, are at once a *Caution* a-  
gainst abusing the Tokens of  
divine Displeasure against other  
Men, and a *Direction* how to  
make a right Use of them. Some  
had given him a Relation of the Cruelty  
of *Pilate* towards some *Galileans*, whom he  
had slain in the Temple, and whose Blood he  
E e had

SER. XIII. had mingled with that of their Sacrifices. These *Galileans*, it is probable, were some of the Followers of *Judas*, of whom mention is made in the <sup>a</sup> *Acts*, and who, as <sup>b</sup> *Josephus* informs us, persuaded the People not to pay Taxes to the *Romans*, and at their Head made an Insurrection against that Government. Against some of these *Pilate* took an Advantage, when they came to *Jerusalem* to offer Sacrifice, and slew them as is before related.

FROM this Narrative our Saviour took an Occasion, to warn his Hearers then, and all his Disciples in after Times, against a Fault, into which Pride and Resentment are very apt to betray Men. This is plainly hinted in his manner of remarking upon it. Suppose ye *that these Galileans were Sinners above other Galileans? q. d.* It is but too common for Men to give into this Way of Thinking. Nor is it improbable that the Manner of relating this Fact, and the Air wherewith the Story was told, might give Ground to suspect, that those who told it were in this Sentiment. Men are very apt to think *they* are the greatest Sinners, whom GOD is pleased to make the most remarkable Sufferers, and who seem to be severely dealt with by him, when others escape. But our Saviour plainly tells us, this is manifest and gross Mistake. Think you these were Sinners above others? *I tell you, nay.* "What-ever your Apprehensions may be, take my Word for it, this is not always the Case." GOD doth not always execute Judgment in this World, upon the greatest Offenders. Greater

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<sup>a</sup> *Acts* v. 37.    <sup>b</sup> *Antiq. Jud. lib. xviii. cap. 1, 2.*



*how abused, and how to be improved.*

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Criminals are many Times spared, when others are punished. But by punishing and judging some, he gives Warning to others, that *they repent, lest they likewise perish*. Whether the other Passage to which my Text refers, was at that time related to our Saviour, by any in the Company, doth not appear. It is not improbable, that Himself took the Hint from the other Story, to refer them to this late and well-known Event, of the Falling of the Tower in *Siloam* on eighteen Persons, and crushing them to pieces, to give what he had said the greater Weight.

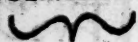
THERE are two Things *expressly asserted* in this Passage, and two more as *plainly implied*, which well deserve our Notice. The Things asserted are

I. *First*, THAT the *Judgments* of GOD are not always executed on the greatest Sinners. Think you these were *Sinners above others*? I tell you, *no*.

II. *Secondly*, THAT the Tokens of divine Displeasure upon some Sinners, warn others to *repent, lest they also perish*. This is the Meaning of GOD in them, and this the Improvement they should make of them. The Things implied are,

I. *First*, THAT Men are too apt to make a wrong Use of the *Judgments* of GOD upon others.

II. *Secondly*, THAT all should be cautious, of making a rash Judgment, upon such Events. I shall speak somewhat to each, and begin with the Things implied in the Words. And,

*The Judgments of GOD on Others,*

I. *First*, MEN are too apt to make a wrong Use of the Judgments of GOD *on others*. By the *Judgments of GOD* two Things are meant in Holy Scripture. Sometimes, and I think most commonly, they signify the <sup>c</sup> Laws and Precepts of GOD with their annexed Sanctions; called by the Schools the *Judicia Dei Judicantia*, the Judgments of GOD enjoining Duty, and declaring the proper Recompences of Obedience or Transgression. Sometimes they signify his Punishments on Sinners for disobeying his Laws, or his inflicting the Penalties threatened in them; and in this Sense they are called *Judicia DEI Judicata*, or the Laws of GOD put in Execution. And doing this is many times in Scripture termed <sup>d</sup> *executing Judgment*. And this is the Sense, in which the Judgments of GOD are *here* to be understood. And every Suffering of this Life may, in this Sense, be termed a Judgment from GOD; as being a proper Punishment for Sin. But in the common Acceptation of the Word, its Signification is still more restrained. By Judgments from GOD we commonly understand, those Evils and Calamities that have somewhat peculiar and uncommon, either in Matter, or Manner, or Circumstances, or with regard to the Instruments; and hereby seem to carry in them more notable and affecting Marks and Tokens of divine Displeasure. Such are

<sup>c</sup> Psalm cxix. 7, 13, 20, 102, 106, &c. Lev. xviii. 4. 1 Chron. xxviii. 7. Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Ch. xx. 11. Deut. viii. 11. 1 Kings vi.

12. Neh. x. 29, &c.

<sup>d</sup> Exod. xii. 12. Ezek. xxv. 11. Psal. cxix. 84. Psal. cxlix. 9, &c.

the Instances here before us, the mingling the SER. XIII.  
Blood of the *Galileans* with their Sacrifices, and the sudden Death of the eighteen, on whom the Tower in *Siloam* fell.

NOW it is too common for Men to make a wrong Use of such Events. They are very apt hereupon to be *too severe* in censuring the Sufferers, and *too favourable* in their Sentiments of themselves. They are apt to think very ill of those, with whom GOD seems to deal more hardly, than he doth with others. They plainly see that they suffer more than others; and hence they are very ready to think they have deserved to suffer more. They have the Tokens of divine Displeasure upon them, and hence the Inference is very easy, though it is many Times *very unjust*, that they are more the Objects of divine Displeasure, than those who escape. Instances of this Kind must have fallen under every one's Observation. It is but too common for *Persons* and *Parties* to be liberal of their Censures, on such sad Occasions. But on the *other hand*, Men are very apt hereupon to think better of themselves, and of those Persons they affect, and that Party of Men among whom they have lifted themselves, than they ought, for such Judgments of GOD on others. They are spared when others are punished. Their Party is in flourishing State, when others are perhaps oppressed by their Enemies, or suffering the Rebukes of GOD. This they fondly take as a Declaration from Heaven in their Favour; and are ready with the *Pharisee* to thank GOD <sup>e</sup> *they are not as other*

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<sup>e</sup> Luke xviii. 13.



SER. XIII. *Men.* Providence makes a plain Distinction between them. Others are under the visible Tokens of divine Displeasure, when GOD smiles upon them. And how easy is the Inference from hence? Therefore sure they are not as bad as others. And hence is it easy to proceed to a very good Opinion of themselves; and because others are worse than they, to conclude all must be well with them. And indeed this Bent of Mind to be favourable to themselves, exceedingly heightens the censorious Humour as to others. The worse a Neighbour's Character appears, the better liking, upon Comparison, will they have to their own. And hence many Things are made *Judgments* of GOD on others, that carry no peculiar Significations of divine Displeasure, but are common and ordinary Events *that come alike to all*. But from the *Judgments* of GOD on others, and many Times from what they meerly apprehend to be so, are Men very apt to think worse of *others*, and better of *themselves* than they deserve.

FOR the Truth of this, one may appeal to common and universal Experience. Good and bad give too easily into this Practice. Men truly pious, and in other Respects of sound and strong Sense, are too much under the Bias of this Inclination; and will utter very silly Things rather than not betray this Infirmary of human Nature. What a wretched Misconstruction did *Job's* three Friends make of his sore Calamity? And because he was a *Sufferer*, conclude him a *Sinner* above other Men? How hard did they bear upon him, and how home did they charge him, with gross Hypocrisy and heinous Wickedness? So that it is a Question, whether the good Man's Patience was not more exercised by

by this Treatment of his Friends, than by all his other Trials. And doubtless they were as ready to make the Difference of their outward Condition from that of *Job*, a Determination of Providence in Favour of themselves, and an Evidence of their Integrity. There are many plain Hints of this Kind, in the Conversation they had with him. Yet they seem to have been Men fearing *GOD*, much in his Favour tho' he was displeased with them for their <sup>f</sup>Carriage towards their Friend, and Men endued with a Prophetick Spirit. It is no Wonder therefore, to find the Inhabitants of *Malta*, who were ignorant Heathens, crying out on the Viper's seizing *Paul's* Hand, & that he was a *Murderer*, whom, tho' he had escaped the Sea, Vengeance would not suffer to live. And how apt are the Bulk of Mankind to attribute every singular Calamity that befalls others, to the peculiar Displeasure of *GOD* against them, for some heinous Sin? How ready are Sects and Parties in Religion, to interpret the Providences of *GOD* in Favour of themselves, and to the Prejudice of their Opposers? To interest *GOD* in their Quarrels and Contests, and make him declare for one and against the other? This is a Practice too common not to be observ'd, and too criminal to be over-looked.

BUT whence is it, that Men are apt to make such ill Use of *the Judgments* of *GOD*, and be so censorious as to others, and so inclined to sooth and flatter themselves? It is a Disposition growing out of many Principles.

IT is the manifest Effect of immoderate Self-Love. Indeed Love to Self was a Part of

<sup>f</sup> Job xlii. 7, 8.

<sup>g</sup> Acts xxviii. 4.

Man's original Constitution: but at present it is degenerated into Fondness and Flattery; Affection and Esteem, out of all reasonable Shape and Size. Men will keep up a good Opinion of themselves at any Rate. And hence a good Conceit of themselves, and a strong Confidence that they are in Favour with GOD, with many Men supply the Room of a good Conscience, and a regular Conversation. And to ascertain themselves of GOD's Favour, are they so apt to interpret his Judgments so much to the Disadvantage of other Mens Characters and Case, and so much in Favour of their own. They must have great Interest in GOD, for whom he declares by signal Appearances of his Power and Providence. Nor will they fail of concluding *the former* to be their own Case, who can but get a thorough Persuasion or strong Conceit that *the latter* is. And it is very easy from immoderate Self-Esteem to slide into this Conceit, when Men see others under the Frowns and Rebukes of Providence, whilst they enjoy its Favours and Smiles. And as every Man is apt to flatter himself, from the Excess of this Self-Love, so

THERE is a great deal of *Ill-will* to others mingling it self, with our over-weening Conceit of our selves. Whoever exceeds in Love to himself, must be deficient, in Proportion, in his Love to others. And as his Fondness for himself, will be made appear in his high Esteem of himself, so his Defect of Love to others will be manifested by his low Opinion of them. And this will fall, just as his Opinion of himself, or that favourite Person or Party he has made himself, rises. And as Self-Love is gratified and fed, by calling in all it can, to support



port a Man's good Opinion of himself and his Party: So his Ill-will to others is humoured and increased, by calling in all the Aids to his ill Opinion of them that he can. If therefore GOD seems to be angry with them, and lay his Hand upon them in any singular Manner, he will easily find out the proper Reasons of this Displeasure, and conclude their *Sins have found them out*: And justify his own *Ill-will* to them, and his *ill Opinion* of them, by a fond Imagination, that they are as vile in GOD's Account, as they are in his. By this Means, he can at once flatter himself, and vent his Spleen against them. When GOD judges others, he clouds their Character and brightens his. At least he will easily bring himself to believe it. And this, for the present, will equally serve his Turn. He may be mistaken, and impose on himself; but in the mean Time he has the Pleasure of flattering himself and censuring others, and of gratifying at once *Self-Love* and *Ill-Nature*.

THERE is also in Mankind a deal of proud Curiosity. Affectation of prying into the Counsels of GOD, and pretending to be in his Secrets. Indeed this is a natural Effect of the forementioned Self-Esteem. They must be much in the Favour of GOD, who are let into his Counsels. <sup>h</sup> *The Secret of the LORD is with them that fear him.* And hence Men presumptuously take upon them to assign the Reasons and Intentions of his Judgments, and mark out his Friends and Enemies by the Conduct of his Providence towards them. When all the while they are only uttering their own Affections and Resentments, and making GOD *such an one as*

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<sup>h</sup> Psal. xxv. 14.

SER. XIII. *themselves*; who must affect and hate just as they do, and have the very same Friends and Enemies. You now see from what Springs this Aptness in Men to make an ill Use of *the Judgments* of GOD proceeds. It is no Wonder,

II. *Secondly*, THAT our Saviour should give us a Caution against judging rashly in these Cases. I mean the visible Tokens of GOD's Displeasure upon other Men, whatever they may have in them singular and apt to draw Attention. That there have been such Things, as may be properly called the Judgments of GOD for Sin, in Ages past, can be no Doubt with any that read and believe the Bible. The drowning the old World, the burning *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, the plaguing *Egypt* in so miraculous a Manner, and overwhelming their King and all his Host in the *Red Sea*, the destroying *Nadab* and *Abihu* by Fire from the Lord, when they dared to burn Incense with strange Fire before him, the cleaving the Earth, and burying *Corah* and his Confederates alive in it, and many more Instances that might be mentioned under the *Jewish* State; and the sudden Deaths of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, the Consumption of *Herod Agrippa* by Worms, and the final Destruction of *Jerusalem* and the *Jewish* State under the Christian Dispensation, were manifest Judgments of GOD, signal and immediate Tokens of his Displeasure against Sin. And by <sup>i</sup> *executing such Judgments bath the Lord made himself known*. Nor will I say but he may sometimes execute such Judgments, and manifest his Displeasure against some daring Sinners, and make them Examples to others, still. But cer-

tain it is, that these Instances are much rarer SER. XIII.  
now, than they were under the *Jewish* *Œco-*  
nomy, or at the first settling the Christian State,  
especially in Case of private Persons Suffer-  
ings. GOD doth not so often interpose and  
shew his Displeasure against particular Offen-  
ders now, as he did then: Nor indeed against  
Communities and Bodies of Men. And there-  
fore we ought to be very cautious, and  
not judge rashly in such Cases. And all such  
Determinations in these Cases, are the Effects  
of Rashness, that are not *very clear*, and *very*  
*sure*: For GOD's *Judgments are unsearchable,*  
*and his Ways past finding out.* The Reasons of  
his Conduct many times lie very deep, and quite  
out of our Reach. And it is no little Presump-  
tion for weak and short sighted Creatures, to  
pretend to know what they are, unless they are  
very obvious and certain.

INDEED it may be certainly known, and  
positively asserted, that the Providence of GOD  
extends to all Events, that <sup>1</sup> *there is no Evil in*  
*the City and the LORD hath not done it*: No  
Evil on a particular Family or Person, but it is  
either from the immediate Hand of GOD, or  
by his Permission and under his Direction:  
That all the Calamities that befall his Creatures  
whether personal, domestick or national, are  
Tokens of his Displeasure against Sin, and pro-  
per Punishments for it; And *thus far* are cer-  
tainly *the Judgments of GOD*: That whomso-  
ever GOD punishes he justly punishes; they  
suffer no more than they deserve: And where  
he seems to punish notorious Sinners with Marks

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<sup>k</sup> Amos iii. 6.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xi. 33.



of peculiar Displeasure, others who are spared should take Warning, and repent of all their Sins, but especially of *any heinous* Sins, of which they know the Sufferers to have been guilty. For tho' those known Sins may not be the particular Provocations for which GOD visits; and they may be mistaken who think they are, yet there can be no Harm in taking Warning by them. Tho' we judge wrong, we shall make a right Application, and a good Use of this erroneous Judgment. But it is easy to misjudge, and good to be cautious. Rash judging is but too common, and should be guarded against with great Care. I shall instance in two Particulars.

I. *First*, IN assigning the *special Reasons* and *Motives* of GOD's Judgments. When Men pretend to point out the particular Crimes, for which GOD punishes, especially in private and personal Instances. Indeed those Evils which *naturally* attend the Commission of certain Sins, and are their genuine Effects, may be said to be proper Punishments from GOD for those Offences. He who gets a Fever by a *Debauch*, brings Rottenness into his Bones by *Leudness*, or brings himself to the Gallows by *Robbery* or *Murther*, may be truly said to be punished in this Manner, for those very Sins. It is no Presumption in us, to assign these as the special Reasons of this Punishment. But these are not *Judgments* in the common Acceptation of the Word. They are but too common Events, and have little or nothing in them unusual and apt to surprize.

BUT where the Punishment hath somewhat of this Kind in it, and therefore the Appearance of a *Judgment* from GOD, it is ordinarily

rily great Rashness to assign a special Sin, as the SER. XIII. immediate and particular Reason of it: For when a Man has been guilty of many Things worthy of Death, and is struck by the immediate Hand of GOD, who, without a particular Discovery of his Mind, can take upon him to assign and ascertain the very Crime for which he dies? And yet is not this the Case of every Sinner judged by GOD? And the same will hold as to lesser Punishments.

INDEED there are some Cases, wherein it looks exceeding probable, that the Punishment is inflicted for a particular Crime. As when a daring Sinner commits Wickedness in open Defiance of GOD, or makes a confident Appeal to him, with Imprecations of his Vengeance on himself, in an utter Falshood, and is struck by his immediate Hand, in the very Act of Transgression, or quickly after it. Thus when Job appealed to GOD for clearing his Character, with this Imprecation on himself, *“If I have lift up my Hand against the Fatherless, then let mine Arm fall from my Shoulder-Blade, and mine Arm be broken from the Bone,* if immediately, or very shortly after he had been struck with a Disease in that Part, so that his Arm had indeed dropt off, would not this have look’d like a Punishment for this Sin, to all who knew him guilty of the Crime which he did, by this daring Appeal, disavow? I say, *to all that knew it,* for to have argued him guilty of the Crime from this Stroke, and made that the Reason of the Charge, had been rash and presumptuous to the last Degree in *it self*, and exceeding

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<sup>m</sup> Job xxxi. 21, 22.

SER. XIII. *in* injurious to him. It was condemning him without any Manner of proper Evidence. A Man must be known to be guilty of a Fault, before he can with any Justice, and without the highest Presumption, be said to be punished of GOD for it. But all the mentioned Circumstances concurring, such a Punishment looks very much like a *Judgment* of GOD for such a particular Sin. And to make use of such an Event, as a Warning to our selves and others, against like Provocations, can do the Sufferer no Harm, and may do us much Good.

AND it looks still more likely to be *such a Judgment*, if the Sufferer himself falls under the Conviction; takes Notice of the Hand of GOD upon him, makes Confession of his Sin, and owns this as a just Punishment from GOD for it. As in the Instance of *Adonibezek* and *Joseph's Brethren*. When *He* was taken by the Children of *Judah*, and had his Thumbs and great Toes cut off by them, he cries out, "*As I have done, so GOD hath requited me*." For he had served threescore and ten Kings in like Manner, and made them gather their Meat under his Table. And when *they* were in Distress before *Joseph*, at that Time unknown to them, they charged themselves deeply with their former criminal and cruel Behaviour towards him, "We are verily guilty concerning our Brother, in that we saw the Anguish of his Soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear: Therefore is this Distress come upon us."

AND if moreover the Punishment carries the plain Mark of the Sin upon it, seems exactly

" Judg. i. 7.

° Gen. xlii. 21.



to answer it, and as it were to tally with it, SER. XIII. it looks more likely still to be a Judgment for that particular Sin. As, when *Nadab* and *Abihu* were slain by Fire from the LORD, for presuming to burn Incense with *strange Fire* before him. And that Instance in the *Revelation*, *They have shed the Blood of Saints and Prophets, and thou hast given them Blood to drink.* But then the Parallel between the Sin and Punishment must only be in Cases where the Offence is notorious, I mean the Fact is notoriously criminal, and the Offender notoriously guilty, and where the Resemblance is exceeding easy and obvious. It is very rash, by the Punishment inflicted, to undertake to find out the Sin. For every thing has two Handles; and it is very easy, for good Wits to give very different Turns to the same Event. It is reported in the <sup>a</sup> Life of *Zuinglius* the famous Reformer at *Zurick*, that when his Body which had fallen in Battle, was afterward burnt, his Heart was found entire in the Ashes. This was an unusual and strange Event, and therefore, in common Reckoning, must be *token somewhat*. And every one would be apt to enquire *what it meant?* And what did it mean indeed? The Hardness of his Heart, say the *Papists*. No, say the *Protestants*, but the Firmness and Integrity of it. And one Side with as much Reason as the other, that is with just none at all.

THERE is hardly an Instance to be assigned, where the Punishment seems more parallel to the Crime, than in the Case of *David*, when he fled before his Son *Absalom*, as *Shimei* put

<sup>p</sup> Rev. xvi. 6.

<sup>a</sup> Vid. *Melch. Adam.* in vitâ.

SER. XIII. it. *The LORD*, saith he, *bath returned upon thee all the Blood of the House of Saul in whose Stead thou hast reigned; and the LORD bath delivered the Kingdom into the Hands of Absalom thy Son; And behold thou art taken in thy Mischief, because thou art a bloody Man.* In these Words *David* is charged by *Shimei* with the Murther of *Abner* and *Ishbosheth*, and probably also with the Death of the seven Sons of *Saul*, who were slain on Account of the <sup>f</sup>three Years Famine (the *Jews* generally thinking that was prior to *Absalom's* Rebellion) and with usurping the Crown. And now, saith he, *GOD* is punishing both the Murther and Usurpation, by delivering both thy self and thy Crown into the Hands of thy Son. Indeed *Shimei* injured him in this Charge. He was neither a Murtherer, nor Usurper. And his Censure for that Reason was exceeding rash, as well as ill grounded. But *David's* Conduct at first View had such an Appearance, especially to a violent Party-Man, such as *Shimei* was; a *Benjamite*, one of *Saul's* Tribe, perhaps of his Family, to be sure much in his Interests, and therefore one who would be very willing to see Things in his own Light, and judge ill of a Man he hated. Tho' he did not see *David's* Guilt in the Evidence of Fact, he could easily discover it, in this very apposite and parallel Punishment. He could easily persuade himself he was pursued by divine Justice, for his Rebellion and Usurpation, when he saw *Absalom* in Arms against him, and in Possession of his Royal Palace. And how apt are almost all Men to draw a Parallel in like Manner, and

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<sup>2</sup> 2 Sam. xvi. 8.

<sup>f</sup> Chap. xxi.

make just such an Interpretation of the divine Proceedings, against the Party they condemn and hate? How plainly can they discern their Sin in their Punishment? And how readily assign a Reason for G O D's Anger against them, if at any Time they are under the Marks of his Displeasure?

How forward are Men, especially when list-  
ed in Parties, to point out, as with the Finger,  
the particular Motives of G O D in judging and  
taking Vengeance. Are there are any grievous  
Calamities on a Protestant Countrey, it is for  
*Heresy* and *Schism*, say the *Papists*. Is a *Popish*  
Countrey thus visited, it is for their *Superstition*  
and *Idolatry*, say the *Protestants*. Are a People,  
who embrace the Sentiments of *Calvin*, under  
the Rebukes of G O D, it is for the *Horrible De-*  
*crece* say the *Arminians*. Are any in the *Armini-*  
*an* Scheme, suffering the like Rebukes, it is for  
their *Enmity to Free Grace*, say the *Calvinists*.  
Do any remarkable Calamities befall a People,  
where *Errors*, or *Heresies*, or *Schisms*, or what  
the People in Power will call by those hateful  
Names, are begun or renewed; how common  
is it for those who find it much more easy  
to brand and destroy *Hereticks* and *Schismaticks*,  
than to confute them, to cry out, these are  
*Judgments of G O D* for these Sins? Whereas  
this is for the most Part, talking in the dark.  
It is confident Intrusion into the Secrets of  
G O D. And as unreasonable as it is presump-  
tuous. For unless all of one Side, in a The-  
ological Debate, were exempt from suffering  
in a common Calamity, how can it be a Judg-  
ment of G O D for the Error of those on the op-  
posite Side? Unless G O D shews his Displea-  
sure against Error, by punishing those who hear-



tilly and fervently hate and oppose it, and contend earnestly for the Truth? I think the Observation of honest *Salvian*, heretofore a *Presbyter of Marseilles*, (that very *Marseilles*, whose late Desolation by the Plague, is the special Occasion of this Day's Solemnity) but, as *Trithemius* the Abbot tells us, such a *Presbyter* as was fit to have been an Instructor of all the Bishops of his Time, is much more just, viz. "*That the Judgments of GOD are much more likely to be inflicted, for the wilful Wickedness of those in the right Faith, than for the involuntary Mistakes of those who honestly follow their best Light, tho' they may be in an Error.*"

UPON the whole, it is commonly very rash to assign the special Reasons of divine Judgments, point out the particular Sins, GOD intends to punish by them: Especially when Regard to Party directs in this Determination, or Men pretend to know the Fault by the Punishment, without being well assured 'tis a Fault, and a Fault fit to be remarked upon in so distinguishing a Manner, before they conclude that GOD punishes for it. Indeed in the Cases above specified, the probable Reasons of divine Judgments may be assigned. It looks likely that they are inflicted for such particular Provocations. And as long as Persons act upon these Appearances, so as to fear divine Displea-

<sup>t</sup> *Episcoporum sui temporis Magister. Trithem. de script, Eccles.*

<sup>u</sup> *Eis, ut reor, patientiam Deus commodat, quia videt eos etsi non recte credere, affectu tamen pia opinionis errare. Max-*

*imè cum sciat eos ea facere quæ nesciunt, nostros negligere quod credunt—— illos id facere quod putent rectum; nostros quod sciunt esse perversum. Salvian. de Gubernat. Dei. l. v. p. 154. Oxon. 1633.*

sure, and avoid like Provocations, such Transgressions as are commonly acknowledged among Christians to be highly displeasing to GOD, or warn others to do so, and pretend to no higher Certainty in the Point, than the Matter will bear, they act only like prudent Men, who upon Probabilities, do well to guard against doing Evil, and provoking GOD. But good Men will at the same time guard against doing Wrong, and will not injure their Neighbours, and unjustly judge them stricken of GOD, under pretence of prudent and pious Concern for themselves. We must be very sure it is *a Crime*, before we venture to say GOD punishes for it. It must be *a Crime notorious* in the general Judgment of all Mankind, at least of all Christians, before we presume to say GOD judges for it, in the strongest and most usual Sense of the Word. It is great \* Uncharitableness and Injustice for Dissenters of all sides, to impute the Sufferings of their Opposers, to GOD's Displeasure against them, for their particular Sentiments and Practices. And we must be very sure we are right, in assigning *a particular Sin*, as the special Reason of GOD's Judgment, before we are positive and peremptory. We may *privately* think a Judgment inflicted for a Sin, of which the Sufferer has been notoriously guilty, whilst we make use of it only, as an Argument against notorious Sin in our selves. This can do no Harm to any, should we be mistaken, and will do Good to our selves. And, in the Circumstances above mentioned, we may warn others by telling

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\* Vid. Dr. Sim. Ford's *Discourse of divine Judgments*, p. 40. 41.

them, such Rebukes from GOD look very likely, to be Judgments for such particular Sins, or Sins committed with such particular Aggravations; and therefore they should be cautious of offending in like manner. If we judge wrong, it will do them no Harm to be-ware. But where *all the mentioned Circumstances* concur, though it looks highly probable that GOD judges for such particular Sin, yet may it be rash to be peremptory and positive. He may have Reasons that lie wholly out of our View and Reach, for punishing in such a Manner. And as long as this may be, we also may be mistaken in assigning the Reasons of it. And I am sure it must be rash to be *very positive*, in all Cases where we *may be* mistaken. But we may also be rash,

II. *Secondly*, IN pretending to discover and declare *the Ends* for which GOD punishes, and punishes in such a manner, as looks like executing Judgment. Many Things in the Conduct of Providence may have a very unkind Aspect, and yet have a very merciful Intention. *Jacob* thought the Loss of *Joseph*, one of the greatest Calamities that could have befallen him. *He mourned for him, and refused to be comforted; saying, I will go down to the Grave mourning for my Son.* Yet was it in great Mercy to Himself, and his whole Family, that he sustained this Loss. *Joseph* being sent of GOD into *Egypt*, as himself tells his Brethren, *to preserve him a Posterity upon Earth, and save their Lives by a great Deliverance.* And when GOD visited *Nebuchadnezzar* for his Sin, de-

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<sup>y</sup> Gen. xxxvii. 34. 35.

<sup>z</sup> Gen. xlv. 7.



prived him of his Understanding, and sent him SER. XIII. a grazing with the Beasts (which was indeed *a Judgment* upon him for his<sup>a</sup> Pride, and vaunting of his Greatness and Power) who could have thought during the Continuance of the Calamity, that it was with an Intention of Kindness? Yet this appears from the Issue of it. It must therefore be very easy for Men, who see no deeper than the Surface of Things, and are very forward commonly in judging of them according to their first Appearance, to mistake the Ends of GOD in punishing. He doth not indeed <sup>b</sup> *willingly grieve the Children of Men*, and therefore never punishes but upon Provocation: But he doth not always, in this Life, punish those most, who most provoke him. Nor are his Intentions always *vindictive*, when his Executions seem *most severe*. <sup>c</sup> *His Judgments are a great Deep*. They lie open to no Eye but his own; and are oftentimes quite out of our Reach, that we can neither discern their *Motives*, nor discover their *Intentions*. We can neither say what provokes GOD to execute them, nor see what he aims at in their Execution, whether private Persons, or Bodies of Men are the seeming Objects of his Displeasure.

YET how common a Thing is it for Men to enter into the Reasons, the Ends and all the Measures of divine Providence? Though nothing can well be more rash and presumptuous, unless GOD had made his Mind known in his Word, or it be so plain and obvious in the Event, that none but the wilful can mistake it?

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<sup>a</sup> Dan. iv. 30, 31. <sup>b</sup> Lam. iii. 33. <sup>c</sup> Psalm xxxvi. 6.

SER. XIII.

*It is prying, and pretending to penetrate into those <sup>d</sup> secret Things which belong to GOD; which he has reserved to himself; and is therefore an invading his Prerogative. It is, as the Apostle expresses it in another Case, an <sup>e</sup> intruding into those Things which Men have not seen, and this from the very same Principle, because they are vainly puffed up with their fleshly Mind. And many times from one much worse, viz. their own Resentment or Spleen against Persons and Parties. In short, it is easy to mistake that for a Judgment from GOD, which is no such thing, and make an ordinary and common Event a peculiar Mark of divine Displeasure. It is easy to mistake that for the special Reason and Motive of a real Judgment, which is no Reason or Motive to it at all. And it is very common to assign those for the Intentions of GOD in judging, which never came into his Thoughts. And this is rash judging or opining rather, into which Men are very apt to slide, especially when they act under the Influence of Affection or Resentment: Against which therefore they need to be much cautioned, and to be much on their Guard. For by such rash Judgment, GOD will be greatly dishonoured, by stamping our Conceits or Resentments with his Image and Superscription, and our Neighbour greatly wronged by ill-grounded Censures. And both these are such heinous Evils, as we can never too cautiously avoid. And thus much of the Things hinted in my Text. I come,*

*II. Secondly, To consider those which are expressly contained in it, which are also two.*

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<sup>d</sup> Deut. xxix. 29.

<sup>e</sup> Col. iii. 18.

I. *First*, THOSE who seem to be most re-<sup>SER. XIII.</sup>markably punished and afflicted of GOD, or  judged by him, are not always the greatest Sinners. The Galileans, whose Blood Pilate mingled with their Sacrifices, were not the greatest Sinners in Galilee; nor those on whom the Tower in Siloam fell, the greatest Sinners in Jerusalem. They are not always the worst of Men, who suffer most in this World, or as to outward Appearance are most abandoned of GOD, or exposed to his Displeasure. No Case could well be more calamitous than Job's. He was plundered of his Substance, had all his Children taken away by a Stroke, was himself covered with Blains and Boils, and prompted by the Wife of his Bosom to curse GOD and die: And what Construction did his Friends, those who should have been his Comforters, put on this Usage? They conclude him to have been a vile Sinner, and an egregious Hypocrite, and that his Iniquity and Hypocrisy were punished in this dreadful manner, to lay them open to the World. Yet was Job a faithful Servant, all the while, and a real Favourite of GOD. Nor did he suffer thus out of any particular Displeasure of GOD against him, but rather from the Confidence he had in him; and that his Faith, and Patience, and Constancy might appear upon Trial, and Himself might stand upon Record, as a glorious Example of these Graces to all Posterity. Who could be exposed to greater Reproach and Injury than the Primitive Christians? The Apostles themselves were accounted the very <sup>f</sup> *Dirt of the*

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<sup>f</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 13.



**SER. XIII.** *World, and the Off-scouring of all Things.* They were hated of all Men, and, as to human Appearance, abandoned of GOD, and given up to the Power of their spiteful Enemies. Yet were they all the while, the dearest Friends of GOD. And it is the common Lot of his People <sup>s</sup> to *suffer Persecution.* Nay, they may be punished for their Sins, and that by his immediate Hand, *that they<sup>h</sup> may not be condemned with the World:* When his Enemies are suffered without any Rebuke from him, to go on in their Sins, till they have filled up their Measure. And so he may *spare* in Displeasure, and *judge* in Mercy.

BUT where those who are judged of GOD are notorious Sinners, they are not always the greatest, who are thus singled out for Vengeance. As great or greater Criminals are frequently spared. Where there are two Offenders in equal Guilt, the Sovereign may order *one* to Execution, and grant a Pardon or Reprieve to the *other*, without Injury to *either*. Nay, where the Guilt and Sentence are not equal, he may spare the Criminal condemned to die, when he orders the other to the Stocks or Whipping-Post. Or should the Sentence of both be capital, when yet the Guilt is unequal, he may spare the greater Criminal, when the other is executed. This is but using his undoubted Right and Power, according to his good Pleasure. And thus may GOD justly deal with single Sinners, or with sinful Nations. As long as he punishes none that are innocent, nor any beyond their Desert, he may

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<sup>s</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 13.

<sup>h</sup> 1 Cor. xi. 32.

exercise his Prerogative in punishing or sparing <sup>SER. XIII.</sup> which he pleases. He may justly pass by the greater Criminal and judge the less. And he may have Reasons for doing this, and Ends in it, unknown to us, but every way worthy of Himself. And this without Doubt is many times the Case. We should not therefore think too hardly of *others* under the Hand of G O D, nor too favourably of *our selves* for escaping. They may be thus punished, not because we are in the Favour of G O D, and better than they; but, perhaps, because he has kinder Intentions towards them than towards us; perhaps, because he would warn us by his Judgments on others, against the Sins of which they *have been*, or those greater Sins of which we *may be* guilty. It is Indulgence in G O D to spare us when others are destroyed, but it is no certain Argument of our being better than they. And it will make our Case in the End much worse than theirs, if it be not duly improved.

A N D here let me observe that G O D has been pleased to visit a neighbouring Kingdom with the Pestilence. So dreadful a Pestilence as is scarce to be paralleled in History. The plain Narration can hardly be born, it is so shocking in all its Circumstances. Any may see this, who will give themselves the *sad Satisfaction*, to look into the Account of it lately published in *English*. The Plague broke out in *Marseilles*, as the Author tells us, in the Month of *June* 1720; but made little Havock till *August*. “ About the <sup>i</sup> middle of which

*The Judgments of GOD on Others,*

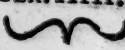
SER. XIII.

“ Month this City looked like *Jerusalem* in its  
 “ Desolation. In fifteen Days the Plague had  
 “ made her the most dismal Theatre, by the  
 “ most frightful Ravages that ever were in the  
 “ World. By this time <sup>k</sup> Compassion was no  
 “ more. The Dread of the Distemper had sti-  
 “ fled all Sentiments of *Charity*, and even *Hu-*  
 “ *manity*. <sup>l</sup> No one was in a Condition to  
 “ apply himself to any thing, but what tend-  
 “ ed to his own Preservation. <sup>m</sup> By *Aug. 25.*  
 “ it came to its full Height. And continued  
 “ to rage from thence to the End of *Septem-*  
 “ *ber*, killing above a Thousand every Day.  
 “ <sup>n</sup> By *Aug. 28.* the City seemed no other than  
 “ a vast Church-yard, and nothing was offer-  
 “ ed to View, but a sad Spectacle of dead Bo-  
 “ dies piled one upon another, <sup>o</sup> and among  
 “ the Dead a prodigious Number of sick and  
 “ dying Creatures. *Some* in a languishing Con-  
 “ dition, expecting nothing but sudden Death;  
 “ *Others* had their Spirits so troubled with the  
 “ tormenting Heat of the Venom, that it con-  
 “ sumed and devoured them, begging Help of  
 “ all that passed by, with piteous Complaints  
 “ and moving Groans. There was an insup-  
 “ portable Stench exhaled from these miserable  
 “ Wretches: And, as if the Distemper of it  
 “ self were not cruel enough, they suffered all  
 “ the Severity of Penury and Want. <sup>p</sup> It  
 “ would make ones Heart ready to break, to  
 “ see so many *unhappy Mothers* with the dead  
 “ Bodies of their Infants lying by their sides,  
 “ and so many *unhappy Infants*, sucking the

<sup>k</sup> Page 49.<sup>l</sup> Page 53.<sup>m</sup> Page 59.<sup>n</sup> Page 61.<sup>o</sup> Page 67.<sup>p</sup> Ibid.

“ Breasts



“ Breasts of their dead Mothers, locked in SER. XIII.  
 “ their Arms, and taking in the Venom from   
 “ their infected Bodies. —<sup>q</sup> If you met any  
 “ in the Streets, they looked as if they were  
 “ half dead, and in a little while sunk down,  
 “ expiring where they fell; or remained in se-  
 “ veral distorted Postures, occasioned by the  
 “ Violence of the Melancholy which had seiz-  
 “ ed the Heart, which threw many into such  
 “ Agonies, that they cut their Throats, threw  
 “ themselves out of Windows, or into the  
 “ Sea, to put an End to the Pains and Ills they  
 “ suffered. <sup>r</sup> Nothing was to be seen or heard  
 “ on all sides, but Cries and Tears, Mourning  
 “ and Sighs, Desolation, terrible Consterna-  
 “ tion, and even Despair. <sup>t</sup> To have a just  
 “ Idea of such Horrors, you must imagine all  
 “ the Miseries at once, to which human Life  
 “ can be exposed, as Frights and the most  
 “ grievous Inquietudes, from which nothing  
 “ but Death can deliver.”

THIS was the deplorable State of that great and populous City. Thus was *Marseilles* laid desolate, within two Months after the Distemper began, in the most dreadful manner, and by the most terrible Pestilence that have been known.

BUT for what Reason? Was *Marseilles* criminal above all the Cities in *Europe*? Were her Inhabitants greater Sinners, than those of other Cities in *France*, or in neighbouring Lands? Than even the Inhabitants of *London*, and the Villages adjacent? I cannot say but they have been guilty of some Sins, from which

<sup>q</sup> Page 68.

<sup>r</sup> Page 69.

<sup>t</sup> Ibid.

we have kept free. But, taking in the Consideration of all Circumstances, it may be justly questioned whether they are greater Sinners than we. If we have not been so *superstitious*, perhaps we have been more *profane*: If we have not been so *injurious* and *cruel* to the Saints and Servants of G O D, perhaps it has been more from Want of Power than Inclination, or else we have been more *leud* and *debauched*. If we have not been so *silly* and *credulous*, so ready to resign our Understandings to those who claim *Dominion over our Faith*, perhaps we have a greater Measure of more criminal *Infidelity*. Or if in any Respect we should be *less wicked*, we have enjoyed greater *Light* and Advantages to make us better. And to be *so wicked* as we are, under *such Means* as we have enjoyed, may be more criminal in it self, and more provoking to G O D, than their *greater Wickedness*, amidst all the Ignorance, and Error, and Superstition in which they have been bred up.

It is not possible for us to know what their Sins have been, nor how loud the Cry of them was in the Ears of the L O R D of Hosts. But it is notorious that our Sins are very many and exceeding great. Atheism and profane Contempt of G O D, and Religion, and Things sacred, Infidelity and Blasphemy, Ignorance and Error, Leudness and Debauchery, Gluttony and Drunkenness, Pride and Luxury, Fraud and Oppression; the most open Sins against the Laws of G O D, the Rules of the Gospel, and the first Principles of all Virtue and Morality, are committed amongst us. \* *By swear-*

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\* Hof. iv. 2.

ing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing Adultery they break out, and too often Blood toucheth Blood. <sup>u</sup> Because of these Things the Land mourneth, and <sup>x</sup> GOD, it is to be feared, bath a Controversy with us. And even among those who profess to be religious, what Lying and Slander, what Hypocrisy and indirect Dealing are there? What Fraud and Oppression, what Pride and Luxury, what Vanity and Worldliness? What Declensions from the Power of Religion, and Defection from the Gospel Rule in Practice? What Neglect of Family Order and Government, and Decays in Family Religion? What Abatements in Love to GOD, and Christ, and our Brethren, and the Souls of Men, whilst a feverish Zeal is indulged and cherished for Men's own Forms and Terms? What Dissension and Discord, what unnatural Feuds and Contentions? Surely we may justly say after our Saviour, that whether those at *Marseilles* and in *France* were greater Sinners than we in *Britain*, in *London*, or no, yet unless we repent we shall likewise perish. Which brings me to the

II. *Second* thing asserted in this Passage, viz. THAT the Tokens of divine Displeasure upon some Sinners, warn others not to perish in Impenitency. *Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.* And here two Things will properly fall under Consideration. (1. *First*.) In what Sense they who continue impenitent, on such Warnings, may be said to perish. (2. *Secondly*.) Who are to be accounted such Impenitents.

<sup>u</sup> Jer. xxiii. 10.

<sup>x</sup> Mic. vi. 2.



*I. First,* IN what Sense are they in Danger of perishing. This may be understood,

*I. First,* OF *temporal Ruin* and Destruction. Very probable is it, that this was our Saviour's primary Intention. He was speaking here to the *Jews*, who, as a Nation, had well nigh filled up the Measure of their Sins, and were just ripe for Ruin. His Method of Expression intimates as much. What we render *likewise*, signifies properly in the <sup>y</sup> *same*, or in <sup>z</sup> *like Manner*. q. d. As the *Galileans* were murdered by *Pilate* in the Temple, and had their Blood mingled with their Sacrifices; so shall many of you be slain. As they on whom the Tower in *Siloam* fell, were buried in its Ruins; so shall many of you, in the Ruins of your City and Temple, *unless you repent*. It is certain from the Relation of *Josephus* the *Jewish* Historian, that this was the sad End of a Multitude of them, in the Siege and Sacking of *Jerusalem* by the *Romans*. Many of them were butchered by one another, and by their Enemies, in the Temple; and many others buried in the Ruins of that and their City. It is not unreasonable to think our Saviour had this in his Eye. And then his meaning will be, you that see these Tokens of divine Displeasure on others, will, if you continue impenitent, perish in like Manner. And such Warning GOD seems to give to a sinful People, by the Desolations he makes in neighbouring Countries, or on Part of their own, by his own immediate Hand. They would do well to take it as a Threatning, that if they continue impenitent,

<sup>y</sup> ὁσαύτως.

<sup>z</sup> ὁμοίως.

they

they shall be laid desolate in the same, or in SER. XIII.  
like Manner. Those who are guilty of the  
same Sins with their Neighbours, who have  
been destroyed, have during the time of Pro-  
phesy been threatened with the same Plagues.  
Thus GOD threatened *Jerusalem* by the Pro-  
phet, *Thou hast walked in the Way of thy Sis-  
ter, meaning Samaria, therefore will I give her  
Cup in thine Hand, and thou shalt drink of it  
deep and large.* Certain it is that such terrible  
Desolations are made for Sin. They are To-  
kens of GOD's just Displeasure against it.  
Though we may not be able to assign the spe-  
cial Sins that are thus visited, yet if we know  
our selves as a Nation guilty of the same Sins,  
or Sins of equal Size, we should take Warn-  
ing and fear like Inflictions, if our Repentance  
prevent not. This is not making an ill, but a  
right Use of divine Judgments. Instead of  
censuring their suffering Neighbours, a sinful  
People should attend to their own Guilt, and  
by their Repentance, take the proper Measures,  
to keep off the like Tokens of divine Displea-  
sure.

II. *Secondly*, THIS perishing may be under-  
stood of the Punishment of Sin in another  
World. The Warning in the former Sense,  
is more proper for a Community, in the latter  
to particular Sinners in any Community. E-  
very particular Sinner is not likely to perish by  
the same *temporal Judgment* which is inflicted  
on others, though he is conscious to himself  
of the same Guilt. Every Criminal is not thus  
to be made an Example. Multitudes may e-

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Ezek. xxiii. 31, 32.

SER. XIII. scape, for one who is thus marked out for Destruction. But a Nation of impenitent Sinners, as such, can only be judged in this World: Sinners being not to be punished hereafter *in Bodies*, but upon the Foot of their own particular Guilt and Transgression. Then all who fear G O D, will be justified and rewarded; though here they contribute to national Guilt, and are very properly made to share in national Punishment. And for this Reason Nations and Communities more frequently suffer the Judgments of G O D, than they are inflicted on particular Offenders. With *these* he will reckon in a future Life, *them* he can only judge and punish in this World. For which Reason, the Tokens of divine Displeasure on some Nations, are proper Warnings and loud Calls to other Nations, to repent of their Sins, lest they be made to suffer in the like Manner. Though we may not know the special Reasons of these Judgments, nor their particular Intentions, we may certainly know that they are for Sin, and may justly apprehend that our Sins should be visited in like Manner, unless Repentance prevent. Not that when G O D's *Judgments are abroad*, it can be certainly said that they will pass immediately on to other Nations, if they continue impenitent. Sometimes those who are as guilty are spared, when others are laid desolate. But by neglecting these Warnings from G O D by the Defolation of others, they may be filling up the Measure of their Sins, and in Generations to come G O D may visit them: As is plain from the Scripture History of G O D's dealing with the *Canaanites*, and that People he planted in their Room. The Defolations of some should therefore be Warnings  
to



to others. They are Tokens of divine Displeasure, and a People who are conscious of great Guilt and Provocation, should take the Alarm, and endeavour by Repentance to avert GOD's Wrath, and prevent like Desolations. This is one Use that Nations should make of GOD's Judgments on others, as is plain from this Passage.

BUT it is certain from the Word of GOD that every impenitent Sinner, however GOD deal with Nations, will *at last* <sup>b</sup> *perish from the Way*, and that with a Ruin much more dreadful than that of the *Galileans*, of the *Jews*, or the Inhabitants of *Marseilles*. He must perish with <sup>c</sup> *everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the LORD and the Glory of his Power*. He shall endure the Torture of the <sup>d</sup> *never dying Worm* and *Fire unquenchable*. He shall not only live for a few Days or Weeks, within the Stench of the putrefying Dead, but be chained up in *Blackness of Darkeness*, among Devils, and the raging Damned: Where his Ears shall be grated for ever, not only with the expiring Groans of the dying, but the incessant Lamentations and Howlings, Shrieks and Outcries of those who shall never die. And by the Tokens of divine Displeasure, which he sees on Sinners in this World, he should take Warning, fear GOD's Wrath, and repent, lest he bring upon himself the insupportable Miseries of a future Life. If others perish in Time by the Hand of GOD, he should take Care that he perish not for ever. This is the proper Use every impenitent Sinner should make of GOD's Judg-

<sup>b</sup> Psal. ii. 12.

<sup>c</sup> 2 Thess. i. 9.

<sup>d</sup> Mark ix. 44.

ments, whether he can discern the particular Reasons and Ends of them or no. And this brings me to enquire,

II. *Secondly*, W H O are to be deemed impenitent? And as to particular Persons this is an easy Enquiry. Every one is so, who goes on wilfully in his Wickedness, whether it be secret or open, in more Instances or fewer. The Atheist and Infidel, the irreligious and profane, the Swearer and Blasphemer, the lewd and debauched, the Thief and Robber, the Persecutor and Murtherer, the injurious and intemperate must all come under this Character. Nay every one who was never yet thoroughly convinced of the Evil of Sin, of the *Plague of his Heart* and manifold Transgressions of his Life, nor was ever seriously concerned to be freed from their Guilt and Pollution: Who never felt the Need of Redeeming Blood and Grace for this Purpose, nor applied to Christ, nor accepted him as he is offered in the Gospel: Who was never converted from Sin to GOD, nor *renewed in the Spirit of his Mind*, and *made alive to GOD*; nor makes this appear by living to him, by making it the great Business of Life to serve and honour, and please him, and his highest Ambition to be happy for ever in his Love and Enjoyment. Every one of this Character is still impenitent, *yet in his Sins*: And if he goes on in this Course, will certainly perish.

B U T it is not so easy to determine, when a Nation, or Body of Men, must pass under this Character, and be impenitent to that Degree as to perish. Certain it is, there is such a Thing as a Nation's *filling up their Measure of Guilt*, when GOD will spare no longer. Therefore was the Ruin of the *Amorites* deferred for some Gene-

Generations, because till then, <sup>e</sup>*their Iniquity was not full.* But no certain Determination can be made by us, when the Iniquity of any particular People is full; because we have no Directions from the Word of GOD how to make it. It is a reserved Point, and among the *Ar- cana Imperii* of the supreme Ruler, his secret Counsels. But there are Symptoms that bode ill, and look very like the Tokens of Impenitence, and approaching Judgment and Destruction. As, for Instance,

WHEN Iniquity of all Kinds abounds, the Contagion is epidemical, and *all Flesh* in a Manner *bath corrupted its Way.* When Forbearance and Mercy will not melt, nor Judgments mend them. When they continue as bad as ever, or grow worse under the Rebukes of GOD upon *themselves*; and will take no Warning by his terrible Judgments on *others.* It filled up the Measure of *Egypt's* Sins, that they were hardened under ten Plagues, and notwithstanding them persisted in their Provocations. This brought on Destruction on their King, and all his Host. <sup>f</sup>*Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved, saith the Prophet, thou hast consumed them but they have refused to receive Correction; they have made their Faces harder than a Rock: They have refused to return.* And what follows? *Therefore a Lion out of the Forest shall slay them, a Wolf of the Evening shall spoil them: A Leopard shall watch over their Cities, every one who goeth out thence shall be torn in Pieces. How shall I pardon thee for this?* And it is yet worse, when notwithstanding the Rebukes of

: Gen. xv. 16.

<sup>f</sup> Jer. v. 5, 6, 7.



SER. XIII Providence, a sinful People are secure in their Sins; <sup>g</sup> *They have belied the LORD, and said, it is not he; neither shall Evil come upon us; neither shall we see Sword or Famine. Wherefore, thus saith the LORD, because ye have belied me, therefore will I make my Words in thy Mouth Fire, and this People Wood, and it shall devour them.* And again, <sup>h</sup> *Yet thou sayest, Because I am innocent, surely his Anger shall turn from me; behold I will plead with thee; because thou hast said I have not sinned.* And when those who profess to fear GOD give in to the common Security, without setting themselves to amend their own Ways, or revive the languishing Spirit of Religion in their own Bosoms and in their Families, or in one another, but instead of this bite and devour one another, it seems to bode approaching Ruin.

AND it is worse still, if new Sins and those of prodigious Size, are committed among a People without Shame or Restraint; and much more with Countenance and Encouragement from those who should suppress them. When open and bare-fac'd Wickedness goes on without Rebuke from Men in Power, or without being lamented by such as cannot restrain it. And the People, in general, *hate to be reformed*: and oppose, and slander, and abuse those who would reform them: Especially if the Watchmen give faithful Warning, and the Ministers of the Word deal plainly with them, and shew them their Sin and Danger. These are sad Signs of Stubborness in Sin, and that GOD is about to deal with them as an impenitent Peo-

<sup>g</sup> Jer. v. 12, 14.

<sup>h</sup> Chap. ii. 35.

ple. Nor is the Symptom much less sad, if <sup>SER. XIII.</sup> those who should warn others, are in general as corrupt as they, and *sow Pillows under their Arm-holes*, and cry *Peace, Peace* to them, notwithstanding their Provocations.

INDEED a small Number in Comparison, who truly repent of their Sins, may delay Vengeance for a Season. <sup>i</sup> *Ten righteous Persons* would have saved *Sodom*. And when the Rulers over a sinful People call to general Humiliation, concur in it, and are regarded by their Subjects, GOD may be intreated to spare, as in the <sup>k</sup> Case of *Nineveh*. And sometimes also, when his own People, those who truly fear his Name, are very importunate Intercessors with him for *their People*, and <sup>l</sup> *stir up themselves to take hold of GOD*. He many times <sup>m</sup> *seeks for one such to make up the Hedge, and stand in the Gap, that he may not destroy a People*. But it is only a thorough Repentance, manifested by a general Reformation, that will be a certain Token for Good. Which brings me to the Improvement of the whole in two or three Words of Advice. And

I. *First*, LET us be *thankful* to GOD for his distinguishing Goodness to *Britain* and *London*: That we have not had the same Messenger of Vengeance among us, as they have had in *France*, the same terrifying Distemper and dreadful Desolations. It is not owing to our selves, but to the meer Mercy and Kindness of GOD, that we have had this Respite. It is not because they have been greater Sinners than

<sup>i</sup> Gen. xviii. 32.

<sup>k</sup> Jonah 3, 7, 8, 9.

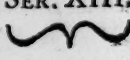
<sup>l</sup> Esai. lxiv. 7.

<sup>m</sup> Ezek. xxii. 30.

SER. XIII. *we*, that they have been thus terribly judged of *GOD*, whilst we have been spared. It is only because it hath seemed Good to a gracious *GOD*, to make this Distinction. And should not our Hearts be full of Gratitude to him upon such an Occasion? Should not *our Souls bless him, and all that is within us bless his holy Name?* That *London* has not been a Scene of the same Horrors and Distresses, of the same Mortality, Misery and Desolation as *Marseilles!* That our Eyes have not been made to see, and our Ears to hear, what our Hearts shake to hear related! That we have not seen the putrefying Bodies of the dead lie in our Streets on Heaps, mixed with prodigious Numbers of the dying, nor heard their piteous Complaints, nor their expiring Groans! Nor shunned our dearest Friends and nearest Relatives, and fled their Presence and their Conversation, as we would a mortal Enemy, without giving them Relief in their most dismal Distress, or expecting any from them! This might have been our Case, as well as that of our Neighbours, had not *GOD* in great Mercy spared us. And should we not mingle Thanksgivings for this Mercy, with our Acknowledgments of Guilt, and earnest Deprecations of deserved Judgment! Is not this a proper Way in which to bespeak and expect farther Favour. We <sup>n</sup> should make known our Requests to *GOD* in all Things, by Prayer and Supplication, with Thanksgiving.

II. Secondly, LET us pity rather than censure our Neighbours, who have been made to drink so deep of the Cup of *GOD's* Anger. Doubt-



less they are Sinners before GOD; or they had SER. XIII.  
not been punished at all. And they have been   
heinous Sinners; or they had not been punished  
with such Severity, and for so long a Continuance.  
But we may easily carry our Censures too far, and be guilty of great Rashness,  
if we enter too deep into the Counsels of GOD,  
and the particular Reasons and Ends of this Visitation,  
and thereby dishonour *him*, and wrong *them*,  
and do Mischief to *our selves*. Whatever they have deserved from GOD,  
and whatever were *his* particular Motives and Views  
in this dreadful Judgment upon them, they are proper Objects of *our* Pity.  
We owe them Compassion as Men; out of meer natural Tenderness and Humanity:  
And much more as they bear the Name of Christ. Nor are they less the Objects of our Pity,  
because Christianity is much corrupted amongst them, they are too insensible  
of this Corruption, too easy under it, and perhaps have been too forward  
(many of them doubtless have) to persecute and destroy those who would have  
purged their Religion from these Corruptions, and rescued them from their spiritual Bondage.  
Let us pity them from our Hearts, and shew our Pity to them, by our earnest Prayers,  
that GOD would put a Stop to the destroying Pestilence, and in due Time  
remove his Hand! And in the mean Time shew them the Evil and Error of their Ways,  
and why, in this Manner, *he condescends with them*. But let us not flatter our selves  
on the Respite afforded us, and conclude in our selves that we are less Sinners than they:  
and much less that we are innocent, and GOD is now engaging in our Quarrel,  
and avenging us upon them as a Party. How great soever their Sins have  
G g 4 been,

been, and their Errors and Corruptions still may be, their Provocations perhaps are less than ours. They are judged for their Transgressions, and we have also among us Sins against the LORD our GOD, not less criminal than theirs, and should by their Calamities take Warning, and not grow secure, and sooth our selves in our Sins, and presume upon GOD's Favour, because we are spared. Nor should we censure hard, but pity and pray for them. We should from such a Subject learn to be less free in our Censures of others, and less forward to pronounce them judged of GOD for the particular Crimes which we may charge upon them, and more fearful of his Judgments on our selves. And therefore,

III. *Thirdly*, LET us make *that Use* of GOD's Judgments on our Neighbours, to which our Saviour here directs us. Let the Desolations in *France* lead us in *Britain* to Repentance. They are Warnings to us to repent, lest we also perish, and perish in like Manner. They loudly call to national Repentance. Love to our Country should excite to this, that we may by returning to GOD keep off such dreadful Judgments. *London* and the Villages adjacent may be visited with like Plagues, if our Repentance prevent not. But whether GOD shall pour out his Wrath upon us as a Nation, in this or any other Way or not; certain it is, that all impenitent Sinners, remaining such, shall perish. And these Tokens of divine Displeasure admonish us, that *o verily there is a GOD that judgeth in the Earth*, and put us awfully in Mind of the more dreadful Vengeance prepared for

the incorrigible in a future Life. *P* *They shall* SER. XIII.  
*be destroyed for ever.* And if it be so frightful  
a Thing to remain a few Months, in such an  
infected City as *Marseilles*, and see so many  
Spectacles of Horror, and hear so many dismal  
Cries and Groans; what must it be to lie down  
in everlasting Burnings, and hear no other Voice  
but the Curses and Yellings of the damned for  
ever. Let therefore,

I. *First*, THOSE who are still impenitent,  
awake. Learn hence, all you who are yet in  
your Sins, how <sup>1</sup> *exceeding sinful Sin is.* How  
much it injures GOD, and incenses him. How  
justly it exposes to his Vengeance and to <sup>2</sup> *ever-*  
*lasting Destruction from his Presence and the Glo-*  
*ry of his Power.* How terrible his Anger is.  
<sup>3</sup> *Who can endure the Fierceness of it?* Consider  
how much you have your selves provoked him  
by your Sins. Labour to understand the Plague  
of your own Hearts, your hereditary Aversions  
from GOD and all that is good; your natu-  
ral Bent of Mind to what is earthly and evil:  
As also to know the manifold Sins of your  
Lives against GOD, your Fellow-Creatures,  
and your own Souls, and the many Aggrava-  
tions of them. Be sensible how much you need  
to have them atoned for by your Redeemer's  
Blood, and to have your Natures renewed and  
sanctified by his holy Spirit: Be not easy in  
your selves, nor give over soliciting at the  
Throne of Grace, till you find your Hearts con-  
senting to the Terms of the Gospel: Till by  
his good Offices you are reconciled to GOD,

<sup>1</sup> Psal. xcii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. vii. 13.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Theff. i. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Nah. i. 6.



SER. XIII. and turned from all Sin. Till you heartily *bate every false Way*, and have *put away all the Evil of your Doings*, and yielded your selves up to GOD, to be wholly at his Service, Command and Disposal: Till, in a Word, you find it is become the Business and the Pleasure of your Lives, to know and do his Will, to honour, serve and please him. Till this is your Case, you are still in your Sins, and every Moment in *Danger of perishing* from the Way. You live upon meer abused Patience and Mercy. And how soon may a Decree go forth for cutting you down? And is yours a Condition to be easy in a Moment? Should GOD visit your Countrey with so fore a Judgment as the Plague, how would you be able to meet him in your present State? For GOD's Sake, for your bleeding Redeemer's Sake, have Pity on your own Souls. *'Awake you Sleepers, and Christ shall give you Light.*

II. Secondly, THOSE who are not in an impenitent State, should yet by this Consideration be moved *to repent*. With them will be found many Things, that are evil towards the LORD their GOD; Many Things amiss in their Hearts and Lives. Upon Search you will find your selves very defective in your Duty towards GOD, your own Souls, your Fellow-Christians and your Fellow-Creatures. And though these will not bring upon you everlasting Perdition, they add to national Guilt, and if not repented of, may bring on national Calamities. You therefore have now a loud Call to repent of the Evil of your Misdeeds. Your

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III. *Thirdly*, LET all who truly repent of their own Sins endeavour also *the Reformation of Others*. Let them begin at home: In their own Families: Among their Domestics, Relatives and Friends: Those with whom they have most intimate Acquaintance, in whom they have most Interest, and over whom they have the greatest Authority. Endeavour to bring them to a Sense of their Sins, to restrain them from *doing Evil*, and to quicken and encourage them to *do Well*. Would every one in his Place exert himself to the utmost of his Power, how much would this farther a national Reformation? And sure it argues a great Deficiency of Charity, of Love to the Souls of Men, when we can with so little Concern, see our Neighbours and Friends, and much more our Relatives, Domestics and Children in *the Gall*  
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AND let us countenance, and encourage, and assist in, every regular Attempt for publick Reformation, if not in Person, yet with our Substance. Let not those of us, who have Ability to support them, suffer Societies that are formed for this good Work to disband, from mere Inability to bear the Charge. At such a Season when GOD threatens, and they need help, you that are able have a loud Call to lend your Assistance. *The Hand of GOD is stretched out.* Our Neighbours have felt his Displeasure; and how soon may we, unless national Reformation prevent? Let us all in our Places help it forward. And,

IV. Finally, LET us be Mourners for those Sins and Abominations, which we cannot reform. Let our Souls mourn in secret for them. Let "Rivers of Water run down our Eyes, be-



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